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THE HUMANITARIAN VERSUS THE RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE



I.

A COMPLETELY or an originally irreligious civilization has in all likelihood never existed, but it is not, in itself, unimaginable; what is more important, the modern civilization of Western mankind, originally (and still, in part, actually) Christian, has revealed a trend of evolution towards a society in which, practically speaking, religion as a determining factor of private and public life is to yield its place to a non-religious, immanentistic, secular moral orientation which may best be described succinctly as "humanitarian." While such a prospect cannot but appall the believer, it has also evoked misgivings and apprehension in a good many non-religious or not emphatically religious students of human civilization; nay, terrified some of them, perhaps, to an extent to which it could never terrify the believer himself. For it is pre-

cisely the nobler and more perspicacious kind of mundane thinker who is apt to be worried primarily about the fate of human civilization as such, than which he knows no higher thing. Yet it is a grave problem, and one that poses itself on a purely worldly level of thinking, how far an irreligious civilization can subsist at all, or how soon it is bound to degenerate into a state of barbarism: in other words, whether humanitarianism is essentially capable of maintaining itself in actual reality or is fated to defeat its own ends, thus marking but a brief transition towards disintegration and anarchy—coupled, of necessity, with new phenomena of tyranny and new forms of gross and superstitious creeds widely dissimilar to its own mental world. It goes without saying that the rise of Communism and of Fascism—most characteristically, however, of Nazism—is entirely calculated to impress the observer as premonitory signs (if not more) of just such a turn of evolution.

The problem I have indicated concerns the Catholic less directly and from a somewhat different angle, but concern him it certainly does. It is not only that we are interested in civilization as against barbarity; nor, merely, the greater freedom the Church may hope to enjoy under a tolerant humanitarian system as compared with fresh brands of virulent paganism and a totalitarian idolatry of secular power; it is also well for us to understand wholly and in all its implications the *intrinsic* inadequacy of humanitarianism, so as to be able to help our non-Catholic and non-Christian fellows towards a fuller understanding thereof. For secular preoccupations of a legitimate and dignified kind have often in history supplied valuable and important elements of society with the initial motives for their conversions to the Faith.

The sketchy remarks which follow, destined to throw some light on a very few aspects of the vast problem, are purely analytic in character, and in no way supposed to contribute directly to a historic prognosis or a cultural program. I may also observe that I intend to examine, here, the “humanitarian” attitude as contrasted to the “religious” attitude in general,

rather than to the specifically Catholic one. By no means does this imply, however, any leaning towards the shallow and absurd view that all religions "teach essentially the same thing"; nor indeed the view that any kind of "religiousness" is necessarily better, or more consonant with the basic values of Civilization, than the irreligious attitude in its humanitarian form.

II.

A few clarifications regarding nomenclature may seem advisable.

1. By a "religious attitude" we mean a corporate—or at least, a socially relevant—outlook on human affairs which contains a reference to a "higher" Power (or a system of such powers) underlying "cosmic" reality, and invested with a "claim" to determine, direct, or guide human thought and behavior. The term "higher" is meant to indicate an order of Reality qualitatively distinct from the natural order of things and events as experienced in the everyday existence of a given society, including even such unknown objects and forces as can at any rate be imagined as mere additional elements essentially fitting into the texture of natural reality. The word "higher" (for which "transcendent," or, in a looser sense, "supernatural" may be substituted) also connotes a specific relationship between the supposed Power and the gradation of recognized values, as well as the hierarchy of social dignities, within natural reality itself: deities are usually, though in various manners and degrees, conceived as the sources, guardians and guarantors of law and morality; as paragons and measures of holiness and rectitude; moreover, as exemplars and incarnations of things noble and things royal. The "Power" in question is also credited with a specific relation to "cosmic" reality: with a faculty of creative and ordering activity, in regard to the things of nature, on a radically and incomparably vaster scale than the human one; a tendency towards assumptions of universality, omnipotence, and creativeness proper is mostly present in some form.

Thus, in religion, the incommensurableness between man and the cosmic forces which surround and condition him without, apparently, being affected by his actions in any but an infinitesimal sense, is at the same time reaffirmed and—tentatively, at least—healed: man is no longer simply a hopeless exile lost in the vastness of things extra-human of which he is doomed to occupy a tiny corner; by dint of his proper contact with the Divine, to which cosmic reality is subject or in which it is centered, he comes to fill a rightful place, to assume a positional value as it were, in the Universe (whatever his concrete conception of the latter). Finally, to the Divine—though its personal nature be represented in a vague and uncertain fashion only—is attributed a “claim” on man; in other words, man’s cognition of the Divine inherently entails obligations on his part. These are always closely interrelated, though never purely and simply identical, with whatever he experiences as moral obligations. The duties and functions of men (in society, or under the eyes of society) thus appear to be specifically incorporated in the ultimate principles of Being as such. I have, naturally, employed a more or less modern and technical language (though, as best I could, a “neutral” one), rather unlike the terms in which actual religious consciousness is wont to express itself; yet it is in some such way, I think, that the main purport of that consciousness may be conceptually grasped.

It remains to be added, however, that the religious attitude also very generally encloses what we might briefly call a negativistic aspect: a tendency to break, to pierce—at least, to modify and to relativize—man’s natural egoism, lust, and joy of life. The motifs of asceticism, sacrifice, self-renunciation, of fear and awe tinging the reverence due to the assumed higher powers, are by no means confined to Hinduism and Christianity; in some form or other, they reappear in practically every religion. Some consciousness (be it ever so dim and rudimentary) of the Fall and of the corruption of human nature, of the need to “propitiate” the “angry” or “jealous” godhead—or again,

of man's need to "purify" himself by techniques mostly involving asceticism—are seldom absent. It is by making him aware of his ambiguous and precarious status as a natural being that religion provides man with a more settled and enhanced position in the face of cosmic nature. His impotence in relation to his environment is rendered more bearable, and indeed even actually lessened in various indirect ways: but this is granted at the price only that he refrains from certain actions which he *could* perform without even becoming liable to any immediate or clearly consecutive punishment, and that he constrains himself to certain other actions which by themselves are entirely strange, and even contrary, to the trend of his primary and "normal" needs.

In connection therewith, the religious attitude always fastens on some element of mystery, too; some concrete and particular myths, holy objects, rituals and rules of conduct: things which from the very outset (and not only in our modern consciousness) essentially differ from the "evident" and more generally communicable data of both experimental world-interpretation and rational morality. In all religion there is some aspect of the mysterious and arbitrary, distinct from normal everyday orientation: something that—apart, perhaps, from such rather specific states of mind as are described under the name of "primitive" animism—subsists as an alien body in the midst of the otherwise prevailing types of thought and "pattern of reactions." The religious contact is definitely experienced as an "irruption" into the natural set of relationships. (Thus the belief in miracles does not, as the pitifully shallow philosophy of enlightenment would have it, issue from ignorance of the "laws of nature"; on the contrary, the very concept of the miraculous presupposes a familiarity with the laws of nature.)

Finally, I have alluded to the "corporate" character, if not of all religious belief or experience as such, yet of all religious systems and practices. Religion is essentially not a matter of "opinions," "convictions," or "conscience," though these

may play a legitimate part in a man's basic acceptance or rejection of a religion, and again in their turn are conditioned by one's religious allegiance and outlook. In fact, religion always intrinsically tends to be "tribal" or "national," or again, whether or not with a universalistic intent, to constitute a community of its own—a "church." And, unlike many other types of "association," the community coordinated to a religion tends to enter into the thematic content of that religion: the ruler is a descendant or a member of divinity; the people is a chosen or a priestly one; the Church herself, as a body, is holy. The adherents of a religion experience it, not only as important and as uniting, but as the token, and the generative principle as it were, of a specification of mankind aware of its own identity. If the religion is frankly universalistic, as is the case with Christianity, then mankind as a whole is deemed to be destined to reshape itself in the concrete community of the "children of God."

2. The irreligious attitude, on the other side, need not of course be what we call a "humanitarian" one. An un-spiritual, purely private and "selfish" outlook on life, for instance, is of fairly common occurrence even in religious ages. Humanitarianism, however, is the standard type of non-religious philosophy. It has risen, in unprecedented vigor, on a soil tilled by Christianity: that is to say, in our own modern age characterized by a decaying and shrinking Christian religiousness. Obviously, Christianity at a stage of disintegration and retreat is calculated to prepare the ground for humanitarianism, for the Christian religion itself, being universalistic, personalistic and moralistic, we may even say in a sense rationalistic, bears a strong connotation of humanitarianism in the broader sense of the term. It places man as such in the center of the created universe; hence the Christian in the process of losing hold of his religion, and restricting his interests to the world of creaturely things, is likely to set up "man as such" as the measure of everything, and to develop a humanitarian outlook. Many simple minds among the modern half-educated hold that humanitarianism is

all that is essential and worthy of respect in Christianity: he who devotes his cares to "social welfare" is the "true Christian," though he may not believe in the biblical God, that "old gentleman with a big white beard,"—seeing that he obeys conscientiously the injunctions of Jesus the great "teacher" of "unselfishness." Many moderns less naive, and some of them actually Christians, maintain that humanitarianism is nothing but "Christianity rationalized," which in their eyes may mean either a "perfected" or an impoverished Christianity. The truth is that humanitarianism is one of the primary, inherent possibilities of our philosophical orientation; it is revealed, for example, in certain types of ancient thought represented by men who lived long before the Incarnation and never heard or cared about the Jewish God. But certainly modern liberal society, with its mental complexion mixed of Christian, semi-Christian and post-Christian ingredients, exhibits the traits of humanitarianism with a unique sharpness and completeness.

The humanitarian attitude, then, takes its departure from the "human needs" in a comprehensive sense of the word: what "men" desire and what they fear, what "men" appreciate and what they loathe, what promises to secure or to enhance and what is apt to threaten or to stunt the "development" and the "happiness" of "men" is to provide us with the basic data for our orientation. All kinds of "needs" and the "needs" of all men or groups of men are equally legitimate in principle; any preconceived bias or restriction is illegitimate. Account is to be taken, indeed, of the mutual interdependence and conditioning of the "needs," including the tensions and antagonistic relations among them: hence the necessity for a (temporary) repression of needs, and for their "scaling" as well as for their "education," is granted. But certainly human needs can only be opposed by—or, on the strength of—more imperious and urgent, more general and more durable needs. We must have a selective recognition and rejection or postponement of needs: but this must be effected on the basis of a purely immanent consideration of the needs themselves—that is, on a basis of "reason"; it

must not be done in deference to any prejudice claiming absolute recognition over and above human needs as such—which would mean “superstition” in the place of reason.

A strictly humanitarian orientation is, of course, impossible in practice, because an all-embracing conspectus of mankind's needs is beyond the mental range of its members, taken individually and collectively; “arbitrary preferences” of various kinds will always enter, though sometimes surreptitiously; they tend to change more or less rapidly in the typical humanitarian mentality, which logically involves a cult of flexibility and adaptability. As regards the metaphysical interpretation of the world most suited to humanitarian ethics, it is inherent in the creed itself that this cannot be more than a secondary concern; on the whole, however, some variety of a naturalistic, mechanistic and sensualistic pattern is undoubtedly preferable, since an attempt to “explain” the world with the exclusion of “transcendent” entities is best in tune with the central tenet: the immanent sovereignty of human needs. Yet a deistic, pantheistic, or even “Christian,” phraseology may seem quite permissible: for a really consistent, broad-minded humanitarianism will not hesitate to register the “religious needs of man,” as well as his “aesthetic needs,” along with the more serious ones. In any concrete question of morals, moreover, humanitarianism may (and often does) happen to arrive at the same conclusion as, say, Catholicism. That the irreligious-humanitarian morality is in no case actually and intrinsically “the same” as any religious morality, and in what typical ways it tends to differ therefrom in a material and tangible sense, will be examined in the third and main part of this article.

3. Before that, however, we must devote some attention to the phenomenon of quasi-religious attitudes. Man does indeed stand in great “need” of religion: wherefore, whenever the traditional religion of a civilization is weakening, and irreligious patterns of thought acquire ascendancy in men's minds, a secondary appearance of semi-religious or para-religious attitudes can be observed. We are faced with a heretical watering-

down of the traditional religion, arbitrary qualifications of the humanitarian creed, semi-scientific fads and fashions, autochthonous or imported superstitions actually believed or flaunted as a matter of diversion, political ideologies assuming a religious tinge and fervor, and the like.

In our own days, Communism and Nazism are sometimes described as "pseudo-religions"; the label is erroneous, particularly in the case of Communism, for what is present there is not so much worldly incentives operating under a pretence of religion as an attitude akin to the religious one which is camouflaged as a "scientific" or purely political doctrine. Hence we ought rather to speak of "crypto-religion," or use the standard term adopted by some critics of totalitarianism: "secular religion." In fact, concepts purely immanent, natural and scientific in appearance, such as the "dialectic evolution of productive forces" or the "world revolution," the "Nordic race" or the "Germanic values" etc., come to assume a psychological function not devoid of certain "religious" traits; for not only do they claim devotion and self-sacrifice, they also carry with them a note of mystery and arbitrary specification, they seem to embody a self-subsistent reality "transcendent" to the rational operations of the individual mind, and, in a word, they belong to the realm not merely of political ideology but of "collective myths." Lenin and Stalin, and Hitler to an even higher degree, unmistakably represent mythical figures in a far more proper and pretentious sense of the term than do the liberal, revolutionary and nationalist political heroes of the last hundred and fifty years, or the minor dictators of our own days.

In a very loose way of speech, we might of course call the ideology of the French Revolution a "religious" one, as it is certainly anything but a plain statement of "scientific truth"; but much more properly may we so describe Communism, and again in a yet stricter sense, Nazi racialism. Although, in fact, the "self-evident truths" of the liberal revolutionary ideology are far less "self-evident" than they were made out to be,

and may in part be no truths at all, they are *conceived as* "self-evident" to anybody's individual reason as such; their *appeal* is directed simply to the "enlightened self-interest" of men. The aspect of "revelation" and "prophethood" implied in Marxism-Leninism, and in a franker fashion and with stronger metaphysical connotations, in Hitlerism, has no counterpart at all in the sphere of humanitarian liberalism. Nor do I think we are justified in calling nationalism the "religion of the present age." A virulent and operative creed, enclosing even a good deal of unreasonableness, need not be anything like a religion: the latter requires an element of cosmic reference, of superhuman afflatus, of mystical transcendency, experienced—though not perhaps formulated—as such.

A society absolutely addicted to humanitarian irreligion seems well-nigh impossible; the predominance of this creed will be mitigated by various "substitutes for religion" which in a religious society would not be present or would be present in a less emphatic, a more simply natural form only. Besides, in the humanitarian societies we know Christianity itself has survived, though largely in a fragmentary shape, and in a restricted and equivocal position. But Communism and especially Nazism, signalizing the advance in depth of the crisis, seem to announce the possible advent of genuine new religions opposed to humanitarianism. This, however, is not meant as a prognosis. It is conceivable that all attempts to introduce new heathen religions in a society impregnated with Christianity will prove abortive; that there will follow a reviviscence of the old religion, or again, a consolidation and expansion of the humanitarian system made more livable, for some time, by subordinate religious factors like traditional Christianity, a somewhat tamed Communism, and possibly others to come.

To avoid a crude misconception, it may be worth noting that "genuine religion" has nothing, of course, to do with "true religion" or "authentic faith." "Genuine religion" belongs to a purely natural, socio-psychological, descriptive order of concepts; it is quite irrespective of the truth or untruth of the

given religion's claim and contents. Several religions may not be essentially true at the same time, nor even enclose the same amount of partial truth; but many contradictory religions may well be fully "genuine religions" at the same time. The worshippers of Baal professed a more genuine religion than many present adherents of a vague and threadbare Christianity soaked in humanitarianism; yet there is more truth, according to our belief, in the religious "persuasions" of the latter than in those of the idolaters.

III.

Turning, now, to the differential description of the humanitarian as contrasted to the religious attitude, we must naturally qualify our query. That the religious mind places God, or the Deity, or things divine, in the center of its outlook upon life, whereas irreligious humanitarianism does not admit of these except perhaps as mere verbal decorations—this is not the difference which interests us here but only the premise to it: the definition underlying the question. We might best put the actual question in the form of an initial doubt on its relevancy. There is an obvious nexus between religion and morality; but most of us have known definitely moral men who were wholly, or all but, irreligious. Civilizations seem to be called into life, and sustained, by religions; but, to put it in guarded terms, a case can be made out for progresses being possible in a civilization weakening in religion and approaching the creed of irreligious humanitarianism.

We may prefer, and prefer infinitely (supposing, in particular, that we are already believers in one given religion) religion plus morality, and religion plus civilization, to morality and civilization alone; or again, to express it differently, morality or civilization inspired and informed by religion to morality or civilization built on irreligious foundations. Yet at the same time we might be obliged to admit that *as* morality or civilization pure and simple, one may look very much like the other. To take one very plain example: I may, at the risk of my own life, rescue a fellow-man from a burning house, because I

obey God's commandment enjoining the love of one's neighbor; but I may equally do so without believing in any divine legislation, because I consider it a moral duty on humanitarian grounds. It would be a false notion (and, let it be stressed particularly, by no means a Catholic one) that in the second case my action, though objectively useful, cannot be a genuinely moral one. Certainly I may also rescue the man from danger because he is a debtor of mine, or in order to boast of my courage; but that is not the supposition. On the other hand, quasi-religious motives may also sometimes approximate towards a crude utilitarianism in reference to expectations in the hereafter.

Not only is it possible for a man to understand, to appreciate, and to cultivate, say, justice, kindness and self-control, without referring them back to the qualities and the will of God, but (in orthodox Catholic doctrine at least) the immanent distinction of Good and Evil is one of the logical premises to the Faith itself (God is good, and wills the good; the good is *not* simply "what God wills"). Are we, then, concerned with a mere difference in the ultimate *motivation* of moral behavior, without any bearing on the *essential contents*, as well as the actual recognition, of morality?

1. It is indeed the problem of motivation, and, linked to that, the problem of obligation on which the defenders of religious morals have dwelt most insistently when criticizing humanitarian ethics. From recognizing the good to practising it, from discerning moral values to accepting the sometimes very onerous obligations they entail, it is a far cry: religious belief in a cosmic reality specifically related to the moral law, and it alone, will guarantee the acceptance of that sacrifice, the translation of moral cognition and preference into terms of action—with the renunciation of pleasures and the endurance of hardships implicit therein. The irreligious man may fulfill his duties so long as they are pleasant; he may also comply with unpleasant ones so long as the privation of satisfactions they involve is moderate, and there is a recompense in sight on another level of pleasures;

but as soon as duty pure and simple confronts the behest of the senses or the possessive instinct, duty will prove weaker: as soon as the man's morality is put to the ultimate and decisive test, it will break down. Viewed in the average perspective, this argument is certainly sound; though it is worth remembering that moral life as a whole does not predominantly consist of "ultimate and decisive tests" and heroic situations, and that religious moralists and pedagogues, too, are almost invariably eager to point out the physical and secular usefulness of a moral conduct and the probable deleterious consequences of sin.

It is more important for us to emphasize, however, that irreligion is also bound to impair moral *cognition* itself. True, the irreligious mind may discern good from evil; but again it may not. Whereas our primary "moral sense" as such does not depend on religious concepts, it yields no concrete, certain, and fully articulated knowledge of good and evil: the latter requires an authoritative divine guidance (which may reach us either in an authentically revealed or, at any rate, in a vague, dimmed, and partly distorted form). Whenever, on the other hand, a moral duty strikes the "decent" but irreligious man as definitely unpleasant, he may well tend to explain it away and to develop a falsified ethic in order to escape both material unpleasantness and the equally unpleasant consciousness of moral guilt or inferiority. Against such an aberration he is protected by no sure safeguard. The humanitarian ethicist who takes his stand on the comprehensive system of "human needs" will no doubt arrive at many materially correct conclusions: first, because true morality in fact closely corresponds with the universal and perennial "needs of man," and secondly, because our supposed ethicist, if he is intelligent, will take account of the "data" of the natural "moral sense," too (that is, of men's average moral preferences and judgments), in his calculus of "human needs"; yet nothing need keep him from placing, in regard to certain problems and in given cases, the urge of morally indifferent or intrinsically reprehensible "needs" (which he deems to be more pressing, more general, or more unalterable)

above even very clearly voiced imperatives of the "moral sense." Not only, then, is irreligious morality a fragile thing in practice, but humanitarian ethic, too, is at its best a flimsy texture at the mercy of *inherent* dangers.

Moreover, it must be axiomatic even for the non-religious but unprejudiced student that humanitarian and religious morality must *always* be different in *quality*. I am not hinting, of course, at the "supernatural virtues" treated in Catholic philosophy, which logically presuppose the belief in transcendent objects of veneration, but am entirely confining myself to the sphere of natural morality. The moral judgment (the act of approval or disapproval as such), the moral decision and outward action, may occasionally or frequently be the same; the moral experience as a whole—even in reference to limited cases or subject-matters—is never the same. For the religious consciousness will, whenever a "moral attitude" is elicited, experience the divine exemplar, codifier and guarantor of virtue at least as a background element of the situation. God is, generally speaking, not the thematic center of natural morality, but the underlying relationship with Him cannot but color and complete even the humblest moral act of deliberation or decision, however humdrum its object. We may understand the "nerve" of justice, as it were (and behave accordingly), without any reference to divine justice ordering the world and providing even human justice with a supreme sanction; but with such a reference wanting or being excluded, we are cut off from the full meaning of justice—applied to matters howsoever trifling.

On the impossible supposition that there were no God, I should still speak "the truth" in affirming that a cardboard box now lying on my writing-desk is yellow and circular, and tell a "falsehood" in asserting that it is blue and hexagonal; yet the thought of God having revealed Truth and not falsehood, of Jesus having risen from the dead "in truth" (which the suspicious and critical Thomas quite understandably doubted at first but was ultimately compelled to admit on the strength of a supremely realistic test), of "*Ego sum via, veritas*

et vita," of true dogma and false heresy, etc., provides Truth, if I may so put it, with a sounding-board of sacredness and inexorable earnestness, should the "truth" in question even concern the color and shape of an unimportant object. Apart from the cases of sensual attraction, particular personal "fancying," or unpersonal tribal "identification," the love of our fellow-men will bear a prim, ice-cold, multilated quality unless it be grounded in the love of Him Who alone is absolutely worthy of love and Who bestows His gratuitous primal love upon all of us. Humility and reverence in the human relationships which properly require them may be possible without religious piety, but they cannot help losing depth, savor, and firmness, if the sphere of their primary and standard objects is removed.

The realm of "*mores*" (that is, of morally relevant social custom) is perhaps even more intimately dependent on religious allegiance than the realm of morality proper. It is by no means in Christian communities alone that *asebeia* has been felt to be inseparable from anarchy and moral disintegration. The reconciliation of personal freedom, dignity, selfhood, and vitality with the requirements of social discipline and coordination, though it may be conceived on extra-religious grounds, constitutes a special function of religion (owing to the specifically "uniting" power of religious experience, and for other reasons which cannot be discussed here); in this matter, particularly, the humanitarian experiment is drawing on the dwindling resources of Christianity, and the precarious balance it has achieved exhibits the signs of shifting towards a totalitarian or "identitarian" loss of liberty and personality: a self-idolatry of "society" pregnant, perhaps, with new types of pagan quasi-religiousness.

2. In sum, the primordial contrast between religious and humanitarian morality lies in the metaphysical substructure, and accordingly, in the ultimate or "official" *motivation* rather than in the contents; but motivation and contents are far from being radically separable from each other, and, though it be in

variable ways and degrees, an essentially altered motivation is certain to react upon the contents themselves. Thus, generally speaking, irreligious humanitarianism necessarily involves a certain bias for immoralism inasmuch as it has no room for the concept of intrinsic moral evil, and of the moral scissure in human nature. Rejecting all intrinsic discrimination between human "needs," and interpreting moral "evil" merely in terms of impulses which in given conditions are likely to interfere with the fulfillment of more imperious, general, and permanent "needs," it is bound to profess an ethical "positivism" cleared from all experience of "sin," which is tantamount to a flattening out of all moral life into a technique of the gratification of desires. True, the full substantiality or self-subsistence of "evil" is questioned in certain religious systems of thought, too (thus, in Catholicism as against Manichaeism); but notwithstanding the essential goodness of being as such, at least in a secondary sense the existence of intrinsic evil—of a basic perversion of the will—is not only admitted but centrally emphasized. Hence, a tendency in favor of the "free will," of responsibility in the strict sense, of a fundamental distinction between formal and merely material defects of human conduct, and of the idea of retaliation: a tendency entirely alien to the humanitarian attitude.

The humanitarian attitude will lean towards making the goodness or badness of any type of conduct dependent on the part it may play in a functional framework of situations; placing instincts and moods on a footing with the direction of the will, manifestations of the "subconscious" with decisions enacted by man's central personality, deficiency in "training" or "development" as well as "disease" with malice and deliberate wickedness; and substituting "cure" or "prevention," "education" or "elimination," for all retaliation proper. To the humanitarian mind, Raskolnikov's "claim" to slaying and despoiling the old usurer will probably appear "erroneous," but not altogether absurd (on the one hand, the old woman's "right to live" is as much a primary "datum" as everybody

else's; on the other, a strong and gifted young man represents a so much greater volume of "needs" and so much more potential usefulness for "society" that his "miscalculation" is at any rate understandable); while the public authority's right to execute the murderer must obviously appear absurd and fictitious—for the infliction of death and suffering will not be made undone but merely aggravated by the consequent infliction of more death and suffering. Under humanitarianism, the judgment of crime will tend to degenerate into a mere protection of "majority" interests: to shrink to a mere repression of the inconvenient—or again, perhaps, to expand into a suppression of whatever may be deemed inconvenient. The selfsame mentality that rejects the concept of punishing the evildoer as "superstitious" or a "mere disguise for the primitive urge of revenge" may glibly accept the "elimination" of the "unfit for life" or the "maladjusted" as an act of "higher humanity."

3. It can be maintained that, in spite of its essential bent towards immorality, the humanitarian attitude may also at certain phases find expression in a kind of hyper-moralism. Such transitional phases in the process of the impoverishment and evaporation of corporate religion have been marked, for instance, by waves of hyper-moralism of the Stoic and the Puritan type. An intensified, systematized, and particularized moral strain may be substituted for the vanishing mystical substance of religion; with faith proper growing more doubtful, reduced, and threadbare, a cramped "impeccable" life may serve to demonstrate one's "effective" belief in whatever is "truly essential" in religion, or one's actual membership in the body of the "elect" or the "wise."

In advanced humanitarianism, the aspect of hyper-moralism will still be present but bear a different tinge. It will no longer cling to arbitrary relics from the old religious morality (including this or that element of material, "mystical" ethics, as well as the overstressing of individual "conscience") but appear more strictly formalistic and organizational: while morality no longer consists in anything but a rational and comprehensive

administration of "human needs" as such, men's vision is directed to *ensuring* a "moral world" and an omnipresence of moral conduct. There is not much sense left in the concept of sexual purity; but, on the other hand, a large-scale building of spacious apartments for everybody will cause sexual impurity to disappear automatically and universally. The "solution of the economic problem" will similarly do away with hatred, jealousy, greed, petty egoism, etc., for when all will live in abundance, there will be no need for anybody to develop such emotions. Liquor prohibition, the outlawry of war, the organized World State, universal free trade, institutionalized national self-determination, etc., come within the same context. Certainly moral values taken in any specific sense of the term seem to be engulfed and transposed here entirely in concepts of material or "psychic" welfare; but the less content attached to the idea of moral perfection and the less moral substance appears to be left over, the more pretentious and cocksure becomes the pursuit of the claim to a formally "perfect" world, a morally "waterproof" and indeed a "foolproof" reality as it were.

4. In general, we may state that the humanitarian attitude while not necessarily out of contact with moral as distinct from material or hedonic values, will be inclined to concentrate (more and more, in the progress of its unfolding) on *such* moral values as can be grasped somehow in analogy with the evidence of the outward senses. Hence the ascendancy a) of formalism, b) of materialism—as opposed a) to "material," "objective," or "intrinsic" value, b) to spiritual points of view. Supposing the primary sovereignty of human needs without any distinction derived from man's dependence on a higher sphere of being, and having regard to their most complex and variable interrelationship, our orientation will necessarily seek guidance from principles as "plain" and "neat" as possible, which are invested with the character of quasi-geometrical "self-evidence." The repression of inordinate self-seeking, the principle of commutative justice may carry as much appeal to the humanitarian as to the Chris-

tian; an appeal always lacking, of course, the complete weight of the Christian experience of good or ill, but occasionally, let it be admitted, exercising an even more acute and—transitorily, at least—more effective pressure. Every possibility of quantification will be seized upon: the “greatest good” of the “greatest number” is proclaimed; every inequality, at least every inequality not directly traceable to innate physiological differences, is frowned upon as an injustice. The differential characteristics of human persons will be negated unless they are verifiable by experimental and statistical methods. Much more attention is paid to the problem of making everyone alike share in the “good life” than to the query as to what the good life really is like; there is less and less care about the existence of standards of culture, but an enormous amount of thought and effort is devoted to the dissemination of culture through education; because the meaning and purpose of life are viewed as purely immanent, and therefore at once self-evident and insusceptible of definition, the technique of life (with a particular stress on technology) becomes the object of a devotion unmistakably imbued with a kind of misplaced religious fervor.

The fatal tendency towards materialism is but another side to this. Taking needs as needs, the material needs of man are more massive, urgent, and obtrusive than those of the soul, and therefore procure a surer guidance and a more fixed pattern of orientation. Everything else appears reduced to the status of a supplementary decoration; it is ordered on the model of the classic and proven organization of things material; the spiritual is tolerated or appreciated as an epiphenomenon, a superstructure, an article of luxury—gossamer stuff, as it were, that cannot be taken truly seriously in the face of the solid necessities and securities of the material sphere. Nor does this hang on the phrase “human needs,” which I think is most expressive of the attitude in question, but is inherent in the very essence of that attitude; instead of “needs,” we may as well choose as a dominant formula human “welfare” or “happiness,” or even the “full unfolding of man’s dispositions and capacities.” All these

may be, and very often are, interpreted generously and intelligently so as to comprise the spiritual, not excepting even the "religious yearning": yet, once the perspective of an immanent humanitarianism is adopted and maintained, the spiritual will be credited with no other mode of existence than a mere elongation or "sublimation" (that is, a possibly attractive but unnecessary and peripheric refinement) of the material, an affair of Sunday boredom or festive recreation, of after-dinner pastime or unguenuine romanticism.

An unprejudiced contemplation of "humanity," with its curious, manifold, and contradictory attributes, is indeed calculated to draw us towards religion: in other words, towards the discovery of man's "fallenness" as well as his peculiar ontological nobility; of his relation to a supra-human reality which exists outside him; in a word, of the radical inadequacy of humanitarianism. However, given the premise of an artificial restriction to "humanity," implying the axiom that all "higher aspirations" of man are meaningless or at any rate irrelevant for us except *as* "higher aspirations of *man*"—irrespective of the objective goal towards which they point—the physical substratum of "human nature" cannot help occupying a central and overwhelming position. If a moribund patient is known to be a devout Catholic, or expresses the wish to receive the Sacraments, we will of course be considerate and complaisant enough to send for a priest, if only to apply a bit of soothing psycho-therapy; but on the plane of terrestrial immanence, any drug which we hope to be ever so slightly efficacious will appear more important and needful than the religious ceremony.

"Culture," again, has no small prestige in the world of humanitarianism; but it has often been observed that it is valued in view of its being somehow translatable—through whatever more patent or more hidden channels of ideas, and interactions of forces—into terms of "money." The ultimately essential category is not, of course, "money" (it is not an affair of capitalism or market economy, with socialism as a

"remedy"), but "welfare," economic security and super-security, protection and perfection of the functional mechanism of "life." "Culture" and its enjoyment is supposed to "educate," "recreate," and "ennoble" man: to render him fitter for work and more "productive," to alleviate the strains he must endure, and to make him more amenable to smooth and rational "cooperation."

Anyhow, the claim of taking into account man's spiritual nature without a genuine and dominant reference to supra-human spiritual reality is comparable to pretending to a vision of man's physical nature without a knowledge of the lower animals and the realm of inanimate material things. In the climate of irreligion, man's spiritual functions and capacities (considered, even, in a purely natural context of objects) will—no matter how much lip-service and sincere enthusiasm be devoted to them—inevitably be understimulated, undernourished, underexercised, and condemned to atrophy; it is the inherent nemesis of humanitarianism that the proclamation of man's "sovereignty" is bound to displace his center of gravity into the nether regions of his being, and to degrade his nature towards a level of sub-humanity. But, seeing that man is and remains man, he is certain to react, sooner or later, in a fashion unforeseen by his humanitarian shepherds: to react morbidly, dismally, disastrously, and perhaps, again, aspiringly and gloriously.

5. A particular point we must pause to consider is that of sexual morality. That the irreligious mind is precluded from the apperception of the values of purity would again be a rash asseveration. Humanity in general possesses an experience of these as of other moral values—though, unenlightened by religious revelation and moulding, it is mostly a stunted and rudimentary one—and sexual immorality rests, not on a literal absence of that experience but (apart from the "weakness of the flesh" proper which is apt to stifle it) on the intellectual counter-pressure of hedonistic ideologies. Now such a "repression" of the moral sense by adverse ideology is particularly

likely to occur in regard to sex morality. Moral "inhibitions" in this field, more than in any other zone of natural morality, are likely to be qualified by the humanitarian critic as superstitious, obsolete, "hostile to life," and "opposed to happiness." The reason is obvious. "Lust"—that is, inordinate sexual pleasure—typifies, in the most exemplary and characteristic manner, the concept of "sin" as such; and the valuation of purity is the very touchstone of "material" (essential, intrinsic, objective) ethics. In other words, "lust" comes nearest to the idea of a material element of life—or a state of mind—"evil by itself" (the word "impure" is meant to express this) rather than evil on account of its impeding the gratification of more imperative needs or impinging upon more inviolable rights.

Perhaps it will be objected that (in Catholic ethics, for instance) the seeking of pleasure is not itself immoral, the profligate or the pervert sinning merely in that he procures himself pleasure by illicit means: just as the thief deserves reproof only because he deprives another person of his rightful property, whereas the use to which he turns the stolen object or money has (generally speaking) nothing bad in itself. However, the structure of the two situations is entirely different: in the case of theft, there is a clear disjunction between good or permissible "ends" and criminal "means," whereas in the case of "evil lust," such a separation is untenable; the circumstances which make sexual enjoyment immoral determine the quality of the pleasure in question and taint the respective experience of the subject as a whole. The situation is comparable not to the one involved in theft as it "normally" happens but to what theft would be if the thief enjoyed with intense excitement the act of stealing itself rather than the goods of which he thus unlawfully gains possession.

On the other hand, sex immorality—in its isolated typical forms, uncomplicated by violence or deceit—fails to involve any transgression of the "rights of others," or even any damage to their interests; in an immanent computation of "human needs," therefore, we may easily be driven to decide that those

needs in their entirety are better served by disregarding certain "needs for chastity" than by refusing gratification to certain, more or less vehement, sensual needs proscribed by religious or traditional morality. Humanitarian ethics will, without doubt, acknowledge and stress the elementary necessity of self-control and the general readiness to exercise it; but apart from this abstract and formal postulate, definite standards of purity can hardly count on any support. The individual and social "harmfulness" of inordinate sexual pleasure *as such* being susceptible of a very vague and circuitous demonstration only, it will appear "rational" to entrust its indulgence or shunning to anybody's personal taste—and more than that, to denounce any emphatic moral standpoint and terminology in these matters as intolerant, superstitious, narrow-minded, arbitrary, and obnoxious. Immoralism will sometimes make fun of our resentment at murder, robbery, cruelty, tyranny, treachery, mendacity, arrogance, etc., "unmasking" it as a manifestation of inferiority, the "instinct of revenge," "neurotic fear," or what-not; but serious and responsible humanitarianism will rarely endorse such a nihilistic attitude except in a local and accidental context. In regard to the sphere of purity, however, the outlook is darker. For here, as we have seen, adequate and objective moral experience is more intimately linked to a sense of religious mystery—a genuine belief in substantial "good" (with the concept of "holiness" hovering uncomfortably near), and in at least quasi-substantial evil. The temptation to discard this kind of moral experiences as delusive, neurotic, wayward, and requiring a thorough "rationalization" (that is, dissolution), is perilously plausible. Only think of how the vast majority of non-Catholic opinion today looks upon Catholic standards concerning contraceptives and divorce or remarriage, not as too lofty and rigorous but as frankly revolting and scandalous.

The most important consequence lies, not even so much perhaps in the actual spreading of sexual licence and its biological and sociological effects, disastrous though these may be, as in

the enervating and deadening action of ideological immoralism in respect of purity *upon men's moral sensibility as a whole*. The category of good and evil—of virtue and vice—being, as it were, mystically up-rooted here, a process of shrinking and flattening will blight moral life in its entirety, including even its most directly “justifiable” and “useful” manifestations. With the destruction of morality *par excellence*, the psychological center of moral fastidiousness is obliterated, the ground prepared for further corrosive “interpretations,” the leverage established for the destruction of morality pure and simple.

A certain formal analogy to the theme of purity is presented by the moral problem of suicide. The *felo de se*, too, “violates nobody's rights” and merely exercises, according to his preference, his empire over himself. Here, again, the humanitarian mind is at great difficulty to find any justifiable ground for moral “interference”; and this, again, is a matter of at least great symbolic importance. Humanitarianism, while it certainly does not encourage man to practise all sorts of iniquity, portends a decisive moral *abandonment* of man.

6. Another important dimension in which the contrast between the two “attitudes” unfolds impressively is connected but by no means identical with the sphere of sexual morality. I am hinting at the rather obscure problems of generation and biological continuity; the sense of the future and the instinct of prevision; the experience of supra-individual duration. The fact that “modern” man, under the influence of what is called here irreligious humanitarianism, reveals a growing tendency to stop procreation and to view the preservation and the status of his family (as a relatively “immortal” social unit) with indifference has been much commented upon. It is not manifest that this should be so; on the contrary, it would be quite understandable that the loss of the religious belief in the soul's survival after death should strengthen the need for “surviving in one's progeny”; also humanitarianism obviously tends, not to neglect but to overemphasize the physical care for children and the task of their mental education. In fact, “enlightened” man

often refrains from begetting progeny unless he feels he can guarantee the utmost degree of security regarding its physical constitution and economic position—which does not happen too frequently or abundantly. However, at the heart of this meticulous responsibility we may again and again discover an all too anxious insistence on one's own "standard of living"—the famous "motor-car which is more indispensable than a child." Yet this is not simply a matter of greed. Rather it ensues from a pious economy, not to say a deification, of "actual human needs": that is to say, the claims of human beings existing at present (including children), or presumed as "present ones" (children whose existence is "anticipated"). The wilful and "unplanned" multiplication of "claimants," with the attendant complication of "needs," is looked upon as irrational; the sovereignty of "actual needs" is incompatible with the realization of a biological or historical continuum. Hence the tendency, not only to regard contraceptive practice as laudable, but to consider even artificial abortion as more or less justifiable.

Irreligious man lives "in the moment"; his great concern about the fate of such children as he happens to have or consents to have does not mean a genuine tribute to the future but merely the incorporation of some technically "future" interests in the context of the present moment: not a genuine recognition of supra-momentary duration (which seems to presuppose a mystical experience, however vague, of eternity as mirrored in continuity throughout time) but merely a craving for "improvement," "evolution," and "expansion" essentially *immanent to the "present moment."* Whoever looks back upon the past as simply dead and done for will also lack the capacity for any organic contact with the future. And a mind must be so fashioned which rejects the idea of there being anything more holy and more objectively real than one's "actual needs" as well as those of the "other members of society" (who people one's "actual," momentary world). What is most characteristic of the full-fledged irreligious mind is not its disbelief in the immortality of the soul but its loss of the desire for immortality:

the evanescence of any meaning attached thereto. This observation is not contradicted but confirmed by the "modern" tendency to ignore death, or banish it from the realm of consciousness, as though it were an unhappy accident or an indecent eccentricity, avoidable in general. Instead of the longing for a status in the order of eternity, the moment with its more and more elaborately subserved needs is set up as a substitute for eternity.

Furthermore, the severing of ties with transcendent reality also determines—subtly and slowly though this law may impose itself—a desiccation and fading away of man's psychic bonds with reality pure and simple. The "release of energies" ostensibly brought about by man's emancipation from religious concerns, anxieties and inhibitions proves temporary, illusory, and lethal. Life that has become "its own master" is bound for suicide. I will no more than mention one highly important political implication: the increasing difficulty for liberal-democratic societies of conducting a sustained foreign policy based on prevision and the sense of continuity.

7. That "culture" in the specific sense of the term—high art, and creative thought—are likely to be seared and to wither away in an age of irreligion has become almost a truism these days, although there was a time when "culture" in this high sense was expected to profit from the disappearance of religion, and also to supersede it advantageously. For it may be conceded that the initial relaxation of religion's control over men's minds may sometimes produce a stimulating and enlivening effect on thought and imagination: the first doubts concerning what was generally and unquestionably held to be true yesterday, as well as a certain measure of the freedom to disagree even in basic things, may exercise an apparently fertilizing fascination on the mind and encourage the flight of fancy. But a morbid over-excitement dissembling an inward consumptive process—a decrease of genuine power and of recuperative faculty—will not be slow to follow, and in due course will again yield its place to manifest drabness, inertia, and mental drought. The truth is

that man is as little equipped to be "imaginative" of his own force as to maintain his moral level on the resources of his own nature. Creative and constructive imagination is consistent with disbelief in the existence of its object, or with a state of evanescent religious belief in general, but it is not consistent with religious unbelief as a basic and stabilized state of mind; nor can it thrive in a social milieu sterilized of transcendent references. Imagination may not imply actual belief, but it does imply a resonance of actual belief, piety, devotion, anxiety, consciousness of one's dependence on a superior Reality: when that resonance is dead, imagination itself will crumple up and become mummified in spite of all endeavors to recapture a mystical "mood" (which is in fact only the aura attending the actual deference to a mystical reality) and of all artifices applied to "inspiring" our thoughts with the allegedly "noblest" theme of human welfare and "optimum adjustment to conditions."

Perhaps, it will be contended, the lack or unguineness of "high culture" can be put up with if at the same time society lives in a civilized order and a state of prosperity—including literacy and a good level of education—which is doubtless possible in logic. But is it so in reality? In this respect many doubts have been expressed. "Where there is no vision the people perish" is a slogan often to be heard today; though most of those who repeat it seem to take it for granted that the prospering of the "people" is itself the primary and proper object of the "vision." Anyhow, I may not be far wrong in assuming that a danger deeper and more dismal is inherent in spiritual inanition and levelling than the boredom and dissatisfaction of a tiny "minority" of refined intellectuals. Humanitarianism suppresses, thwarts, and stultifies too much that is by no means a mere froth upon the surface of "serious" life but belongs to the very viscera of human constitution. Whether or when the mankind of which we are will again hunger strongly and widely for the kingdom of Our Lord we do not know; but there are not a few presages that in some way or

other (sociologically speaking) the "gods and demons" will, sooner and more sweepingly than many would surmise, come into their own.

More acute observers have voiced the paradoxical suspicion that the emancipation and deification of human "life's aims" may result in a decay of men's joy of life, psychic vitality, and appetite for work as well as enjoyment of pleasure. If that were true, and more than an accidental and sporadic or transitory phenomenon, it might indeed mean that humanitarianism is doomed to defeat its own ends. Some would put the blame specifically on Puritanism; but I wonder whether the old crabbed Puritans did not live with far more "gusto" and vigor than do the vitamine-conscious sovereign selves of an earth-controlling, labor-saving, "streamlined" modernity. Others would indict, precisely, mechanized production and the soulless "mass existence" it determines; but civilizations which lacked our technological temptations have revealed more or less analogous symptoms of psychic consumption after the basic faith which inspired them was gone; it seems as though our socio-economic technique of life were less a primary cause than an effect and expression of more central processes.

We will not argue at any length with the not too numerous austere moralists who allege that modern man is cloyed and oversaturated with goods and pleasures (as though the simple abundance of goods or comforts could account for the fierce obsession with prosperity; as though surfeiting itself would not indicate a wrong and one-sided kind of food, or an ill-balanced disposition on the eater's part) nor with those tenacious humanitarians who persist in denouncing "under-consumption" and this or that "maladjustment" betokening that the "economic problem" or, better still, the "cultural problem" is "not yet solved." Most of us bewail the "disproportion between mankind's stupendous progress in controlling the material forces of the world and his much less satisfactory control of moral and spiritual ones"; and this sounds fairly convincing. However, the reason does not lie in the

so much greater controllability of material forces but in the fact that Man has essentially chosen to "progress" on the wrong track; and he will continue doing so as long as he dreams of "controlling moral and spiritual forces" (on the model of the material ones, of all things!) instead of surrendering to the moral and spiritual Reality outside and above him.

By formalizing, restricting, relaxing and refusing his allegiance to Him Who Is, man has set himself at war (a war waged on innumerable fronts) with Being as such, and condemned himself to seek satisfaction in the dissolution and reduction of all Substantiality and Nobility. By "emancipating" the Image from its Exemplar, the privileged Creature from its sovereign Creator, he has virtually destroyed his very humanity. He will recover his humanity (including even its undergrowth of psychic robustness) as soon as he truly and integrally reasserts the greatest and most vital of his needs, ignored and maimed and stifled by humanitarianism: the need for a meaning of his life which points decisively and majestically beyond the range of "his needs."

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THE CONFIGURATION OF THE SACRAMENTAL CHARACTER



IN THE Council of Trent the Church has solemnly defined that three sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, impress on the soul an indelible mark, by reason of which these sacraments cannot be repeated.¹ In virtue of this definition, therefore, it is necessary to believe in the existence of a sacramental character. It is also necessary to believe, in virtue of this same definition, that the mark impressed by the sacraments, and called a character, is a spiritual and supernatural quality inhering in the soul, distinct from divine grace.²

In regard to the indelibility of the sacramental character mentioned in the definition of the Church, it is a matter of faith that the character remains at least during the earthly life of the one receiving it. The doctrine that the character endures forever, that is, in the souls both of the glorified and the damned, is at least theologically certain, if not a matter of faith.³

Theologians have for a long time investigated the nature of the sacramental character to determine its precise nature as a quality and its immediate subject of inherence. Nothing has been defined by the Church in regard to these questions, but the doctrine of St. Thomas that the sacramental character effects in the soul a participation in the priesthood of Christ can be said to be theologically certain by reason of common accep-

¹ Sessio VII, can. 9: Si quis dixerit in tribus sacramentis, baptismo, scilicet, confirmatione et ordine, non imprimi characterem in anima, hoc est signum quoddam spirituale et indelibile, unde ea iterari non possunt; A. S. Cf. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 852.

² Cf. B. Durst, "De Characteribus Sacramentalibus," in *Xenia Thomistica*, II, p. 551.

³ *Ibid.*

tance by theologians. The question, however, as to the precise way in which this participation in the priesthood of Christ is effected by the sacramental character is again a matter of free discussion.

Since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when theologians began to scrutinize minutely the nature of the character, it has been described as a sign that is distinctive, configurative, dispositive and obligatory. What particular meanings these terms have depends largely upon the particular theologian's views concerning the nature of the character (that is, the category of being to which it belongs) and the function exercised by the character in the causation of grace.

The main points of St. Thomas' doctrine regarding the sacramental character can be reduced to the following statements. The sacramental characters are impressed by the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. The characters are either active or passive instrumental potencies which effect in the soul various configurations to Christ the Priest. The immediate subject of the character is the intellect, since the function of the character is exercised in the reception or administration of the sacraments, which are protestations of the faith. Since faith resides in the intellect, so does the character. Furthermore, since the intellect is incorruptible and the priesthood of Christ eternal, the character is indelible.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the nature of the configuration to Christ effected by the sacramental character. It will be assumed in this study that the doctrine of St. Thomas is true, not only as it regards the sacramental character directly, but also as it concerns the physical causation of grace by the sacraments. There will be no discussion, then, as to the merits and demerits of other systems which variously assign the nature (i. e., the category) of the character, its subject of residence, or the cause of its impression.

Since St. Thomas usually employs the term configuration to signify the likeness impressed in the soul by the sacramental character, that usage will be observed in the following pages.

This study will serve, it is hoped, to establish a basis for contrasting the likeness to Christ effected in the soul by the sacramental character and that effected by grace, referred to by St. Thomas as a conformity.⁴ The question of sacramental configuration is properly a Scholastic problem. Although the teaching of the Scholastics regarding the nature of the sacramental character is foreshadowed in St. Paul's references to the Sealing of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the Greek Fathers regarding the *Sphragis*, the investigation of the question in these pages is restricted to the age of Bonaventure, Albert, and Thomas.

The question as to how closely the Scholastic deductions regarding the nature of the sacramental character followed the metaphors employed by the Fathers is of merely historical interest. It can therefore be omitted from the present consideration. The problem of configuration arose out of the attempts of the Scholastics of the twelfth century to describe the causation of grace by the sacraments.⁵ Since the character came to be regarded as a *res-et-sacramentum*, an intermediary between the external rite and the ultimate effect of the rite in the soul, the question regarding the likeness to God effected in the soul by the character quite naturally arose. In this paper we will point out briefly the solutions of St. Albert and St. Bonaventure regarding this problem that St. Thomas' doctrine may be seen in clearer relief.

The teaching of St. Albert and St. Bonaventure relative to the likeness effected in the soul by the sacramental character is essentially the same.⁶ Both of them hold that the character is

⁴ Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 69, a. 9, ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum quod baptizari in Christo potest intelligi dupliciter: uno modo in Christo, id est, in Christi conformitate . . . alio modo dicuntur aliqui baptizari in Christo, in quantum accipiunt sacramentum Christi; et sic omnes induunt Christum per configurationem characteris, non autem per conformitatem gratiae. Cf. also, I, q. 93, a. 4.

⁵ Cf. "Caractère Sacramentel," in *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, Vol. III, Coll. 1698-1703.

⁶ *Sancti Bonaventurae Opera Omnia* (Quarrachi), Vol. IV, Comm. in Sent. P. Lombardi, Lib. IV, D. VI, P. I, art. unicus. The doctrine contained in *Breviloquium*,

an imperfect habit—imperfect in the sense that it demands the full perfection of grace, although it can exist without it. It likens the soul to God inasmuch as it is a step towards grace. This likeness of the soul to the Most Blessed Trinity is a shadowy likeness compared to that of grace. Since the character is an advance towards grace it resides in the three powers of the soul wherein shines forth the “natural image” of God: in the intellect, memory, and will. It is impressed in the soul by reason of God’s will to set men in special states of faith. The identity of doctrine regarding the configuration of the sacramental character in St. Bonaventure and St. Albert arises from their agreement that the character is an imperfect habit—imperfect in relation to grace, the perfection of the soul, to which the character is a disposition. Since the character is, in the teaching of these two Doctors, a step towards grace, it effects a likeness to the Blessed Trinity superior to that of the natural image of God in man, yet vastly inferior to that realized by grace.

St. Thomas’ doctrine marks a sharp divergence from these views. This is not surprising, since he departs from the basic premise of his predecessors by assigning the character to the category of potency. In that assignment is contained not only the point of departure from his predecessors, but the root of all St. Thomas’ doctrine regarding sacramental configuration. In pursuit of this question it would be interesting to compare the doctrine of St. Thomas as it is presented in his *Commentary on the Sentences* with the more mature treatment of the *Summa*. This paper, however, will be confined to the consideration of St. Thomas’ doctrine as presented in the sixty-third question of the Third Part, with such occasional references to the earlier work as seem necessary.

The exposition given here will follow the treatment of the sacramental character as given by St. Thomas in the first three articles of the sixty-third question as closely as possible, with,

P. VI, art. 6, is a summation of that in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and adds nothing to it. *B. Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, ed. Borgnet, Paris, 1894, Vol. XXIX, Comm. in IV Sententiarum, Disp. VI, art. 3, seqq.

however, such explanations and digressions as seem necessary to point his exposition to the special problems relative to the question of configuration. The exposition will be divided into three main headings corresponding to the first three articles of the sixty-third question, which will, however, be entitled differently from St. Thomas' articles for reasons that will be evident as the exposition proceeds.

In treating of the character, St. Thomas follows his usual order of pursuing the four causes. In the first article he establishes the existence of the character from a study of its final cause. Its formal cause (or category of being) is considered in the second article. The efficient cause is considered under the question, "whose character is this." The material cause (*materia in qua*) is determined in pursuit of the question whether the character is present in the essence of the soul or its faculties. The remaining two articles deal with the questions of the indelibility of the character and the particular sacraments that impress a character.

The present exposition will proceed under the following headings:

- I. The Character as a Sign.
- II. The Character as an Instrumental Potency.
- III. The Character as a Configuration.

I. THE CHARACTER AS A SIGN

In considering the character as a sign, it is necessary to ask whether the character is a sign in the proper sense of the word or only analogically. St. Thomas answers this question in the first article of the question under consideration in replying to an objection.⁷ The character, the objection proceeds, is a distinctive sign. But a thing that is not evident to the senses cannot be a sign. Therefore it would seem that a character is not impressed in the soul. The answer given by St. Thomas is the thoroughly familiar one that the character, while not visible in

⁷ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 1, ad 2.

itself, is so by reason of the sensible sacrament which impresses it. Here, it should be noticed, St. Thomas makes use of the distinction between the character considered in itself and considered in relation to the external sacrament. This is his invariable practice in speaking of the character as a sign in the *Summa*.

The character impressed in the soul has the nature of a sign inasmuch as it is impressed by a sensible sacrament; a man knows that he is signed by the baptismal character by the fact that he is washed with sensible water. Nevertheless, that which configures to someone or distinguishes from another even if it is not sensible can be called a character or sign through a certain similitude.⁸

From this quotation it can be seen that St. Thomas teaches that the sacramental character considered in relation to the external sign is a sign in the proper sense of the word. Considered as it is in itself, however, it is a sign only by analogy.

The next reference St. Thomas makes to the character as a sign is in answer to an objection in the following article and is based upon the definition of the character which in the *Commentary on the Sentences* has been ascribed to the Pseudo-Denis. Since the character is a sign, the objection says in effect, it is a relation, not a potency. The objection, of course, proceeds on the confusion of the material and formal considerations of a sign. Every sign is, in its formal consideration as sign, a relation; but that on which the relation is founded, and hence, the sign materially considered, is in some category other than relation. Thus, smoke bespeaks a relation to fire, and as bespeaking that relation, it is formally a sign. But smoke is not in the category of relation, but of substance. All this is implied in St. Thomas' answer:

It is necessary that the relation which is implied by the name sign be based upon something. The relation of this sign, however, which

⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 1, ad 2: Character animae habet rationem signi in quantum per sensibile sacramentum imprimitur; per hoc enim scitur aliquis esse baptismali caractere insignitus quod est ablatus aqua sensibili. Nihilominus tamen character vel signaculum dici potest per quamdam similitudinem omne quod configurat alicui vel distinguit ab alio etiamsi non sit sensibile.

is the character, cannot be based immediately on the essence of the soul, since then it would belong to every nature naturally. And therefore it is necessary that something be placed in the soul upon which this relation is based.^{8a}

In this answer St. Thomas does not engage in a discussion of what "this sign which is the character" is related to, but it is characteristic that in the answer to the very next objection he invokes the distinction between the character considered in itself and considered in relation to the external sign:

The character has the nature of sign by reason of its relation to the sensible sacrament by which it is impressed; but considered in itself, it has the nature of a principle.⁹

In the next article, which treats of the character as a participation in the priesthood of Christ, St. Thomas sums up all of his previous statements regarding the character as a sign:

The sacramental character is a thing (*res*) as it relates to the external sacrament, and is a sign (*sacramentum*) as it relates to the ultimate effect. And therefore something can be attributed to the character in two ways: in one way, according to its nature as sacrament, and in this way it is a sign of invisible grace which is conferred in the sacrament; in another way, as it is properly the character (*secundum propriam rationem characteris*) and in this way it is a sign configurative to someone principal, in whom resides the authority for that to which one is deputed.¹⁰

The doctrine contained in this response cannot be summed up better than in the conclusions of Fr. Doronzo: ¹¹

^{8a} *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 2, ad 3.

⁹ Q. 63, a. 2, ad 4: *character habet rationem signi per comparationem ad sacramentum sensibile a quo imprimitur; sed secundum se consideratus habet rationem principii per modum jam dictum in corp. art.*

¹⁰ Art. 3, ad 2: *Character sacramentalis est res respectu sacramenti exterioris, et est sacramentum respectu ultimi effectus. Et ideo dupliciter potest aliquid characteri attribui: uno modo secundum rationem sacramenti, et hoc modo est signum invisibilis gratiae quae in sacramento confertur; alio modo secundum propriam rationem characteris; et hoc modo est signum configurativum alicui principali apud quem residet auctoritas ejus ad quod aliquis deputatur. . . .*

¹¹ "De Characterē ut est Res et Sacramentum," in *Revue Univ. Ottawa*, Vol. VI (1936), pp. 243-261.

1. The character considered as a *res-et-sacramentum*, and in that part *qua* sacrament, is a dispositive sign of grace.
2. The character considered as *res-et-sacramentum*, and in that part *qua* *res*, is a distinctive sign.
3. The character considered in itself is a configurative sign.

This, however, is to be noted about these three propositions: In the first two propositions the word sign is used in the proper sense of the word, namely, to signify a sensible reality. The character is, then, a dispositive and distinctive sign insofar as it is related to the external rite. In the third proposition the word sign is used "*per quamdam similitudinem*."¹² Precisely how the character is a sign in this extended sense of the word can be made clear only after the question concerning the nature of sacramental configuration has been discussed. Again, it is to be noted in regard to the second proposition above, where the statement is made that the character is a distinctive sign, that this does not mean distinctive as opposed to configurative. A distinctive sign may be either natural or arbitrary. Thus, a "character" branded upon sheep would be an arbitrary sign of distinction denoting the owner of the sheep by reason of an agreement among men that such a mark would signify such an owner. The "character," (image) upon a coin would ordinarily be a natural sign of distinction, denoting by its very nature the sovereign from whom the money receives its value. Thus, a distinctive sign that is at the same time a natural sign can, it is evident, be called a configurative sign, since configuration of its very name signifies connaturality. In this use of the term "configurative sign," however, as applied to the sacramental character, it is obvious that the term "sign" is used in the proper sense to signify a sensible reality. Therefore it can be said that the character is a configurative sign in the proper sense of the word sign, inasmuch as the sacramental character is a natural, distinctive sign. It is a sign because it has an infallible connection with the sacramental rite; it is a distinctive natural sign, because it not only distinguishes those pos-

¹² Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 68, a. 1, ad 2.

sessing it, but bears in its very nature a relationship to Christ. How the sacramental character is related to Christ will be seen in discussing the character as it is a participation in the priesthood of Christ. Since this relationship to Christ is not a visible reality, the term configuration will not be used to signify a distinctive sign that is natural, but rather the inward reality upon which the connaturality of such a distinctive sign is based. Configuration, therefore, as it is used in these pages will signify participation in the priesthood of Christ.

II. THE CHARACTER AS AN INSTRUMENTAL POTENCY

In the *Commentary on the Sentences* St. Thomas makes a most important departure from the more common opinion of the contemporary doctors in assigning the character to the category of potency.¹³ After dismissing the arguments of those who held that the character is a habit, St. Thomas adduces positive reasons for his opinion which may be summarized briefly as follows: There are certain operations peculiar to the regenerated state of man. These special supernatural operations require special supernatural powers. These powers are similar to the forces in virtue of which the sacraments themselves produce their supernatural effects, since just as the sacraments operate instrumentally, so those receiving the character operate ministerially. Now it is evident that to operate as a minister is to operate as a living instrument. The character, which makes it possible for man to function as a special minister of God, is, therefore, a quality placed in his soul that has the nature of an engrafted faculty or potency.

This is essentially the same argument that is brought forth in the *Summa* except that in the *Summa* St. Thomas introduces the concept of the character's relation "to those things which pertain to divine worship according to the rite of the Christian religion." In the *Commentary on the Sentences*, St. Thomas' usual expression in speaking of the action proper to the character

¹³ *Comm. in Lib. Sent.*, Lib. IV, Disp. IV, q. 1, art. 1, sol.

is "*actiones spirituales*." The change is significant, since insofar as St. Thomas speaks of the worship of God, he has laid the basis for determining the subject of the character.¹⁴ But far more worthy of notice for the present study is the latter half of the phrase, "according to the rite of the Christian religion." What is especially to be noted in the present consideration is that the phrase does not read "according to the religion of a child of God" nor "according to the rite of supernatural religion." Likewise it is to be recalled that St. Thomas uses the same phraseology in concluding that sacramental grace adds something over and above the notion of sanctifying grace.¹⁵ From this it is indicated that there is an intimate connection between the potency which is ordained to those things which pertain to the worship of God according to the rite of Christian religion, and the nature of sacramental grace which is ordained to supply the special needs of Christian life.

In determining in the second article that the character is an instrumental potency, St. Thomas gives a special meaning to the subsequent question, "whose character is this," since that question will then be a pursuit of the principal cause in virtue of which the character operates. It is in answering this question that St. Thomas describes the character as a configuration to Christ the Priest. A better understanding of that answer will be gained if the peculiar nature of that potency is more fully appreciated and if the problem is investigated of how an instrumental potency can be spoken of as a participation.

In pursuing the first consideration it must be remembered that St. Thomas determines the character to be not merely a

¹⁴ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, art. 4, ad 3: *Character ordinatur ad ea quae sunt divini cultus, qui quidem est quaedam protestatio fidei per exteriora signa. Et ideo oportet quod character sit in cognitiva potentia animae in qua est fides. (Cf. the commentary of Cajetan on this article where it is pointed out that although the worship of God pertains to justice, the character is nevertheless rightly placed by St. Thomas in the intellect.)*

¹⁵ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 62, art. 2, ad 1: *Gratia virtutum et donorum sufficienter perficit essentiam et potentias animae quantum ad generalem ordinationem actuum animae; sed quantum ad quosdam effectus speciales, qui requiruntur in vita christiana, requiritur sacramentalis gratia.*

potency, but an instrumental potency. The sacramental character renders a man a potential instrument of God.¹⁶ Hence it can be seen that the character is a completely unique reality, for God does not require any proper capacity in the instruments that He uses.¹⁷ The other instruments used to produce God's effects, for instance, the sacraments, or a miracle worker, are constituted instruments only in the moment of acting, that is to say, in the moment of being used. God's use of a man as a miracle worker places nothing in the man permanently¹⁸ and His use of the sacraments sanctifies them intrinsically only in their moment of use.¹⁹ The character, however, because it is a permanent quality,²⁰ renders a man a potential instrument of God: there is something in his soul in virtue of which he, and he alone, can be used to perform or receive those things pertaining to the worship of God to which the character is ordained.

The second thing to be considered by way of introduction to the question of configuration is the problem of how a potency can be spoken of as a participation. The basic principle of St. Thomas' conclusion that the sacramental character effects a configuration to Christ is that the character is a potency ordained to things of divine worship. A basis for understanding this doctrine will be gained by a brief review of the nature of participation.

Participation, according to its nominal definition, signifies the relation that exists between part and whole. In the material

¹⁶ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 2: Sciendum tamen quod haec spiritualis potentia est instrumentalis, sicut dictum est de virtute quae est in sacramentis. Habere enim sacramenti characterem competit ministris Dei: minister autem habet se per modum instrumenti . . . et ideo . . . character . . . reducitur ad secundam speciem qualitatis.

¹⁷ Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, II-IIae, q. 178, a. 1; III, q. 13, a. 2; De Potentia, q. VI, aa. 3 & 4.

¹⁸ *Idem.*

¹⁹ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 62, a. 3, corp.: Gratia est in sacramento novae legis, non quidem secundum similitudinem speciei, sicut effectus est in causa univoca; neque enim secundum aliquam formam propriam et permanentem et proportionatam ad talem effectum, sicut sunt effectus in causis non univocis, puta res generatae in sole sed secundum quamdam instrumentalem virtutem, quae est fluens et incompleta in esse naturae.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 63, a. 5.

order participation is realized in the relation that exists between a quantitative part and its corresponding whole. Thus, half an apple participates (is a part of) a whole one. In the formal order participation is spoken of in relation to an exemplar.²¹ The exemplar is conceived of as the plenitude of form in relation to which other forms are said to be participative. In the formal order, then, participation consists in imitation. An exemplar, however, properly exists only in the mind of an intelligent agent, according to which he works.²² The imitation of an exemplar in extra-mental reality is therefore an analogical imitation (participation), since the extra-mental exemplar is not properly an exemplar. In the efficient order, participation is spoken of as the relation that exists between mover and thing moved. Thus, a subordinate cause is said to participate in the motion of its superior cause. This participation is realized most perfectly in an instrumental cause, whose whole being is "to be moved."²³ It is important to realize that the participation of an instrument in the causality of the principal cause is not the participation of a form in an exemplar, either proper or analogical, but is a distinct type of participation, namely, participation in the order of efficient causality. The being of an instrument is motion, which is not a form but a tendency. Not having a

²¹ Cf. T. M. Sparks, O.P., *De Divisione Causae Exemplaris Apud S. Thomam* (Somerset, Ohio), 1936.

²² Cf. Sparks, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27: Concl. 1a: Causalitas exemplaris, sensu exemplaris, sensu formali et proprio, convenit agentibus per intellectum. Agens autem per intellectum est vel increatum, i.e., Deus, vel creatum. Concl. 2a: Exemplar seu forma exemplaris est vel in mente artificis vel non. Tamen ut exemplar secundo modo, actu fiat exemplar, necesse est ut ab artifice inspiciatur. Cf. *idem*, p. 59: Imprimis recolendum est ex Capite I, quod formaliter loquendo non habetur causalitas exemplaris nisi quando habetur in agente idea; aliis verbis perfecta et formalis causalitas exemplaris convenit tantummodo agentibus per intellectum. Idea ergo est proprie causa exemplaris; alia vero oportet esse exemplaria impropria.

²³ This participation of an instrument again admits of various degrees of participation, since the instruments that God uses do not dispose the matter operated upon, but the action operating (Non ex parte rei operatae, sed ex parte modi operandi [Cf. Bannez, *Comm. in Iam Partem*, q. 45, a. 5], whereas creatures use instruments that exert some dispositive effect on the matter affected.

form, then, motion cannot be said to participate in an exemplar of form. Nevertheless, since knowledge can be had only in terms of act, the imperfect being of instrument is *denominated* in terms of form, namely as "*esse motum*" or "*esse intentionale*." It is this denomination of the imperfect being which is not a form in terms of form which gives a basis for speaking of an analogical participation of motion in an exemplar, analogous, now, in respect of the analogous participation according to extra-mental forms. It must be remembered, however, that such denomination of motion in terms of being is due to its logical consideration in a moment of act in which, however, it does not actually (apart from the consideration of the mind) exist. Were it to be said simply that the instrument participates in the principal cause as created being participates in God as Exemplar, the statement would be erroneous, in confusing two distinct types of participation: formal on the one hand, efficient on the other. To preserve ourselves from error it must be remembered that motion as it really exists does not admit of participation in the formal order.

The relation of this to the doctrine of the character may be stated as follows: In the very act of cooperating with God in those things which pertain to divine worship, man participates as an instrument; participates therefore in the efficient order. However, because the character is a permanent quality, it is not merely by a logical consideration that according to his character man is configured, that is, "participates in the form of" Christ the Priest.²⁴ On the other hand, in producing the acts proper to his character, man can be said to be configured to the actions of Christ, in the sense that he participates in the

²⁴ This seems to be the meaning of St. Thomas in the following passage, q. 63, a. 5, corp.: *Character sacramentalis est quaedam participatio sacerdotii Christi in fidelibus ejus, ut scilicet sicut Christus habet plenam spiritualis sacerdotii potestatem, ita fideles ejus ei configurentur in hoc quod participant aliquam spiritualem potestatem respectu sacramentorum et eorum quae pertinent ad cultum divinum. Et propter hoc etiam Christo non competit habere characterem, sed potestas sacerdotii ejus comparatur ad characterem, sicut id quod est plenum et perfectum, ad aliquam sui participationem.* (The fact should not be passed over that the article from which this quotation is taken treats of the permanence of the character.)

“motion” of Christ as a subordinate instrumental cause. Thus it has been pointed out that St. Thomas speaks of configuration in his *Commentary on the Sentences* chiefly as it is a configuration in action.

These notions prepare the way for a more complete understanding of the doctrine of configuration—that is to say, the doctrine which holds that man in virtue of the possession of an instrumental power is said to participate in the priesthood of Christ.

III. THE CHARACTER AS A CONFIGURATION

Thus far it has been pointed out that in its formality of *res-et-sacramentum*, the character is a sign in the proper sense of the word; considered according to its proper formality it is a sign in an extended sense, which is described as a configuration. It has also been shown that the character is a unique reality inasmuch as it is a permanent instrumental potency. Indication has also been given of the peculiar meaning “participation” will have in speaking of the character.

These notions are all preparatory to understanding St. Thomas’ answer to the question “whose character is this.” St. Thomas answers, as has been said, that the character is that of Christ the Priest. The meaning of that answer will be more fully appreciated if this discussion now reverts to the phrase, “divine worship according to the rite of the Christian religion.” The worship of God is the object of the virtue of religion.²⁵ As such it consists of acts both interior and exterior, the most perfect of which is the offering of sacrifice.²⁶ The present study is not directly concerned with such a notion of the worship of God, but rather with the question of how the worship of God offered by Christ, our “one High Priest,” continues to have its effects in the ages that follow the performance of his principal priestly act upon the Cross.²⁷ The fact that the sacraments are

²⁵ *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 81, a. 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, qq. 82-91.

²⁷ All the meritorious actions of Christ were priestly acts, since of themselves they had infinite value, as proceeding from a divine Person. Nevertheless the merits of

the means of distributing those effects is assumed here;²⁸ likewise, not only that in the Eucharist there is present the Author of grace, but also that in the confection of that most august Sacrament there is performed a Sacrament-Sacrifice, the representation under the sacramental veils of the Price offered for the redemption of mankind.²⁹ What is important to see in connection with the present study is that every sacrament pertains to the priestly act of Christ offering sacrifice, as causing the grace He merited, and that some sacraments have a special relation to the Passion of Christ, or what amounts to the same thing, to divine worship according to the rite of Christian religion.

These sacraments which have a special relation to the Passion, in the words of St. Thomas, show forth to a man "something new" pertaining to the worship of God.³⁰ This "something new" is then a special relation to the Passion of Christ, or, since the nature of the character has already been determined, a new power relative either to receiving its effects, or for transmitting those effects to others.³¹ It can be seen, then, why only three of the sacraments impress a character: because only three of them establish man in essentially different distributive relations with the Passion of Christ. Baptism gives the ability to receive the fruits of the Passion sacramentally; Confirmation,

His acts were ordained by God to be consummated in His Passion and Death upon the Cross. Cf. Durst, "De Characteribus Sacramentalibus," *Xenia Thomistica*, Vol. II, 1924 (pp. 541-581); p. 559: *Fontes autem revelationis constanter adscribunt redemptionem nostram pretioso sanguini Christi et ejus passioni et morti, ergo cultui quem in sacrificio crucis exhibuit; ex quo sequitur, secundum liberum decretum Dei singula opera Christi non distributive sed collective sumpta simul cum sacrificio crucis habuit valorem satisfactorium in actu secundo. Christus autem per hoc, quod moriens in cruce Deo cultum in forma veri et sacrificii realis exhibuit, sacerdos in stricto sensu evasit, ergo ut verus sacerdos salutem nostram operatus est.*

²⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 62, a. 5.

²⁹ *Idem*, q. 83, a. 1. Cf. Vonier, *The Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (London, 1925).

³⁰ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 6.

³¹ The sacramental character is directly related to the external signs of divine worship (the sacraments), which will be shown later. Nevertheless, it is important to see that the character is also related to the causation of grace through the administration and reception of the sacraments.

the power to receive them with greater strength; Orders, the ability to cooperate with Christ in distributing these fruits to others.³²

All the Sacraments of the New Law, then, pertain to the worship of God according to the rite of the Christian religion inasmuch as through their administration the soul is perfected by the salutary effects of the Passion of Christ.³³ Some, however, effect a result which makes their recipients instruments or ministers of Christ's Passion; that is, by the reception of some sacraments men are constituted not only recipients of Christ's Passion, but ministers of it.³⁴

Christ is a priest inasmuch as he is man.³⁵ His priestly act—the offering of condign satisfaction for the sins of mankind—was offered by Him as a principal cause and as an instrumental cause. He offered as a principal cause inasmuch as His sacrifice was meritorious. Since merit can only be gained through the voluntary act of a creature, it is evident that Christ's meritorious actions proceeded from His human will as from a principal cause. Christ's Humanity, however, also effected the fruits of the Passion efficiently inasmuch as His Humanity was conjoined to the Person of the Word in Hypostatic Union.³⁶

Since the sacraments produce their effects as instrumental causes³⁷ it is evident that they derive their efficacy from the Humanity of Christ precisely as that Humanity is the conjoined instrument of His divinity.³⁸ How, it is well to ask, can

³² *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 6: Ad agens in sacramentis pertinet sacramentum ordinis, quia per hoc sacramentum deputantur homines ad sacramenta aliis tradenda. Sed ad recipientes pertinet sacramentum baptismi, quia per ipsum homo accipit potestatem recipiendi alia Ecclesiae sacramenta; unde baptismus dicitur esse janua omnium sacramentorum. Ad idem etiam ordinatur quodammodo confirmatio.

³³ *Idem*, ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum quod per omnia sacramenta fit homo particeps sacerdotii Christi; utpote percipiens aliquem effectum ejus.

³⁴ *Idem*, and immediately following: Non tamen per omnia sacramenta aliquis deputatur ad agendum aliquid vel recipiendum quod pertinet ad cultum sacerdotii Christi; quod quidem exigitur ad hoc quod sacramentum characterem imprimat.

³⁵ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 22, a. 2.

³⁶ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 48, a. 6 ad 3: Passio Christi secundum quod comparatur ad divinitatem ejus, agit per modum efficientiae; in quantum vero comparatur ad voluntatem animae Christi, agit per modum meriti.

³⁷ *Idem*, q. 62, a. 1.

³⁸ *Idem*, q. 62, a. 5.

this be done? How does the power of Christ's Passion reach the material elements of which the sacraments are composed? The answer to this question gives the solution to the problem of the nature of configuration. In order to arrive at this solution it is now necessary to discuss in some detail the nature of instrumentality.

An instrument, in its widest meaning, is a means used to accomplish an end. An instrument can operate either in the order of final causality (a moral instrument) or in the order of efficient causality (physical instrument). This consideration is concerned only with physical instruments. Since the problem of configuration is concerned with the question of God's use of instruments, it will be necessary first to discuss the difference between man's use of instruments and God's use of them.

The first and essential difference between man's use of instruments and God's is that man is necessitated to use instruments whereas God is not. God can accomplish by an act of His will anything that is not intrinsically impossible. There is no need for Him, therefore, to assume other causes to cooperate in the accomplishment of His will. Man, however, has no intrinsic power over the proper virtues (*potentias*) of things outside himself.³⁹ To accomplish certain effects, therefore (e.g., the

³⁹ Cf. *De Potentia*, q. 6, a. 3: Id quod est immediata causa reducens formam de potentia in actum per generationem et alterationem, est corpus aliter et aliter se habens, secundum quod accedit et recedit per motum localem. Et inde est quod substantia separata suo imperio in corpore causat immediate motum localem, et eo mediante causat alios motus, quibus mobile acquirit aliquam formam. Et hoc rationabiliter accidit. Nam motus localis est primus et perfectissimus motuum, utpote qui non variat rem quantum ad rei intrinsecam, sed solum quantum ad exteriorem locum; et ideo per primum motum suum, scilicet localem, corporalis natura a spirituali movetur. Secundum hoc ergo corporalis creatura obedit imperio spiritualis secundum naturalem ordinem ad motum localem, non autem ad alicujus formae receptionem; quod quidem intelligendum est de natura spirituali creata cujus virtus et essentia est limitata secundum determinatum genus, non de substantia spirituali increata cujus virtus est infinita, non limitata ad aliquod genus secundum regulam alicujus generis. (The doctrine contained in this quotation anticipates much of what is to be said in the text below. Yet it is well to place it here that what will be said may be seen to be entirely in accord with the mind of St. Thomas.)

plowing of a field), it is necessary for him to discover something that in virtue of its inherent power will aid him in the accomplishment of his intention.

An instrument then has two actions: ⁴⁰ one proper to itself and the other which is not proper to it. Thus, to cut is proper to a saw; to make a cabinet by cutting is its instrumental action. There is therefore in the instrument a twofold principle of operation: one proper to itself (e.g., the sharpness of the saw); the other communicated to it by the principal agent in virtue of which the instrument is said to produce the effect intended by the principal agent (in the present example, the cabinet). This latter principle of operation is the very motion (*usus passivus*) whereby the instrument is moved by the principal agent. Here, however, one must be careful not to make an equivocation upon the word "motion."

Man, as has been said, and as is evident ⁴¹ can move causes subordinate to himself only in virtue of his power to move things locally. He cannot move them in the sense that he can educe them from their proper potency to their proper action, or, as it might be stated, he can make them to operate, he cannot determine how or why they will operate. Thus, man can move oxygen from one place to another without affecting it intrinsically; yet in virtue of local motion he can cause oxygen to form water, namely by so moving it locally that it will come into contact with hydrogen. For understanding the difference between man's use of instruments and God's, it is important to see that man's power over material things is restricted to his power of moving them locally. It is, nevertheless, in virtue of his power to move things locally that he can cause things to happen which would not happen except in virtue of the local motion communicated to them. The things moved by man, then, are said to produce effects in virtue of a higher power than

⁴⁰ For what follows here regarding instrumental power and action, cf. St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 178, a. 1; III, q. 13, a. 2; q. 62, a. 1, ad 2; *De Potentia*, q. 6 aa. 3 and 4; Cajetan, *Comm. in III*, q. 13, a. 2; Bannez, *Comm. in I*, q. 45, a. 5. Cf. also Gredt, *Elementa Philosophiae*, I, n. 576, 2.

⁴¹ Cf. footnote 39.

they have by nature. Nevertheless it is by reason of their capacity to be moved locally that they are able to be used by man; and it is in virtue of their power to do something proper that man is motivated to move them locally and so produce an effect that is attributed to him as a principal cause.

Man, then, in his construction of instruments properly so called unites in an accidental union things that by action and reaction will produce an intended effect (e.g., a violin).⁴² This constructed instrument is said to have two powers: one to be moved locally and one to be moved artistically.⁴³ It is now important to remember that the term "to be moved locally" is applied to an instrument properly so called. Thus to move the violin locally does not mean to carry it about; it means to vibrate the strings. Any man, then, it is usually said, can move the instrument locally; but an artist is required that it be moved instrumentally or artistically. Here it is important to see, and it is evident from what has already been said, that artistic motion is merely local motion. It is however motion that is caused by an intelligent agent and is therefore such local motion as will cause the violin not merely to make a sound, but to produce a melody. To describe this motion communicated by the artist as "*esse intentionale*" is somewhat misleading, since it might be thought that the artist has a more intrinsic effect on the instrument than to move it locally. It seems more in harmony with St. Thomas' terminology to reserve the term "*esse intentionale*" to the motion whereby God's instruments are used and to describe the transient force communicated by man to his instruments as "*esse motum*."⁴⁴ God is not restricted

⁴² Cf. footnote 39: Id quod est immediata causa reducens formam de potentia in actum per generationem et alterationem est corpus aliter et aliter se habens, secundum quod accedit et recedit per motum localem.

⁴³ Cf. Cajetan, *Comm. in III*, q. 13, a. 2.

⁴⁴ Cf. *De Potentia*, q. 6, a. 4, where St. Thomas compares (does not identify) the "intentiones" of God's instruments to the motion of instruments: Virtus ad cooperandum Deo in miraculis in Sanctis intelligi potest ad modum formarum imperfectarum quae intentiones vocantur, quae non permanent nisi per praesentiam principalis agentis, sicut lumen in aere et motus in instrumento. Again, cf. *Sum.*

to using instruments nor in his use of instruments is He restricted to certain instruments for particular effects.⁴⁵ The reason for this is that God not only can move things locally, but can move beings from any state of potentiality to any act not involving impossibility for a creature, and from no potency at all to act. He can do this because He is the Cause of being as such. Thus, God in His use of instruments is only restricted by the nature of instrumentality. He only requires that the instrument operate, not that it operate in any particular way. This operation of the instrument exercises dispositive causality, but not necessarily in regard to the matter operated upon. It can also dispose in regard to the manner of operating.⁴⁶ God's use of men as instruments is seen most clearly in His communication to them of the power of working miracles. The function of the thaumaturge is that of "carrying the divine command" to the matter upon which the miracle is to be performed.⁴⁷ The use of men to perform miracles offers a valuable parallel to the use of men for the distribution of the effects of Christ's Passion. The primary difference between these two uses of men by God is that the gift of working miracles is not given to men as a permanent quality of soul. St. Thomas explains the reason for this: ⁴⁸

Theol., III, q. 64, a. 8, ad 1: Instrumentum inanimatum non habet aliquam intentionem respectu effectus, sed loco intentionis est motus, quo movetur a principali agenti.

⁴⁵ *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 178, a. 1.

⁴⁶ Cf. Bannez, *Comm. in Iam Partem*, q. 45, a. 5.

⁴⁷ Cf. *De Potentia*, q. 6, a. 4: Videmus autem quod imperium divinum ad inferiores rationales spiritus, scilicet humanas, mediantibus superioribus, scilicet Angelis, pervenit, ut in legislatione apparet; et per hunc modum per spiritus angelicos vel humanos, imperium divinum ad corporales creaturas pervenire potest, ut per eas quoddammodo naturae praesentetur divinum praeceptum; et sic agant quoddammodo spiritus humani vel angelici ut instrumentum divinae virtutis ad miraculi perfectionem; non quasi aliqua virtute habitualiter in eas manente, vel gratuita vel naturali, in actum miraculi possint (quia sic quandoque vellent, miracula facere possent; quod tamen Gregorius non esse verum testatur; et probat per exemplum etc.).

⁴⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, II, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1: Sicut prophetia se extendit ad omnia quae supernaturaliter cognosci possunt, ita operatio virtutum se extendit ad omnia quae

Just as prophecy extends to all things which can be known supernaturally, so the working of miracles extends to all things which can be done supernaturally: the cause of which (works) is the divine omnipotence which cannot be communicated to any creature. And therefore it is impossible that the principle of working miracles be a quality habitually remaining in the soul.

Now it is St. Thomas' teaching that Christ, according as He is man, possesses the power of working miracles, and He possesses this power permanently.⁴⁹ He has this power, however, not by reason of a permanent quality of His soul, but by reason of the Hypostatic Union.⁵⁰ He can communicate this power to others,⁵¹ but not as a permanent quality.⁵² How, then, it might be asked, can Christ communicate the power of His priesthood to others in the form of a permanent quality? The answer is that Christ does not, and could not, communicate *His* priesthood in its fullness to anyone, for His priesthood is uniquely the priesthood of the Word Incarnate. He could indeed have communicated His "power of being the principal minister" in regard to the sacraments (which principality of power would include the sanctification of the sacraments in the name of that hypothetical priest, the institution of the sacraments and independence of external rite),⁵³ but it is important to remember that if Christ had communicated this principality of administration in regard to the sacraments, such sacraments would not operate efficiently

supernaturaliter fieri possunt: quorum quidem causa est divina omnipotentia quae nulli creaturae communicari potest. Et ideo impossibile est quod principium operandi miracula sit aliqua qualitas habitualiter manens in anima.

⁴⁹ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 13, a. 2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ad 3.

⁵² II-II, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1.

⁵³ Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, q. 64, a. 4: Christus habuit in sacramentis duplicem potestatem: Unam auctoritatis quae competit ei secundum quod Deus, et talis potestas nulli creaturae potuit communicari, sicut nec divina essentia. Aliam potestatem habuit excellentiae, quae competit ei secundum quod homo, et talem potestatem potuit ministris communicare, dando scilicet eis tantam gratiae plenitudinem, ut eorum meritum operaretur ad sacramentorum effectus, ut ad invocationem nominum ipsorum sanctificarentur sacramenta, et ut ipsi possent sacramenta instituere et sine ritu sacramentorum effectum sacramentorum conferre solo imperio.

in the causation of grace but only morally.⁵⁴ This, at least, seems to be implicit in the doctrine of St. Thomas and its relevance to the nature of the sacramental character justifies a short digression on the point.

The causation of grace is reserved to God alone and to the humanity of Christ as physically conjoined to the Divinity in the union of Person. Thus the others to whom Christ could possibly have communicated a power of excellence in regard to the sacraments would have been subordinated to Christ as lesser heads; acting therefore as principal causes and not as instrumental causes.⁵⁵

The ability to act as the first instrumental cause of grace belongs exclusively to the Word Incarnate. In the event that Christ had communicated his power of excellence so that the sacraments would have their effect by reason of the invocation of names other than Christ's, the grace that was merited and *caused* by Christ's Passion would be conferred upon the invocation of those names; but this would not be in virtue of an instrumental power, but by reason of merit. The reason for this, in the teaching of St. Thomas, is that such sacraments would not be sanctified in the Name of Him, Who alone is the primary instrumental cause of grace.

It is seen from this that the teaching of St. Thomas regarding the existence and nature of the sacramental character is intimately connected with his doctrine regarding the efficient causality of the sacraments. The reason why the sacraments of the

⁵⁴ Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. VIII, a. 6: Interior autem influxus gratiae non est ab aliquo nisi a solo Christo, cujus humanitas ex hoc quod est Divinitati conjuncta, habet virtutem justificandi. (Notice also the words contained in the previous footnote, "dando eis tantam gratiae plenitudinem ut eorum meritum operaretur ad sacramentorum effectus.")

⁵⁵ III, q. 64, a. 4, ad 3: Ad hoc inconveniens evitandum, ne scilicet multa capita in Ecclesia essent, Christus noluit potestatem suae excellentiae ministris communicare. Si tamen communicasset, ipse esset caput principaliter, alii vero secundario. (What has been said in the text, of course, refers to the administration of the sacraments. It seems to be St. Thomas' opinion that God could use others as instrumental causes for causing the effect of the sacraments without the external rite. Cf. q. 64, a. 4, in fine corporis; also the commentary of Cajetan on this article.)

New Law cause grace efficiently is that they are linked up physically with the Passion of Christ.⁵⁶ The physical link is the sacramental character. Therefore the sacramental character—an instrumental potency—is required for the efficacy of those sacraments which physically cause grace.⁵⁷ Since the Passion of Christ causes our salvation, the power which God uses in the causation of grace through the sacraments is therefore the link in our souls to the Passion of Christ and it is rightly called the character of Christ. It sets us apart from those not physically affected by the Passion of Christ.

Since Christ insofar as He is man is the principal instrumental cause of grace, it is possible for others to be constituted subordinate instrumental causes of grace and to be such through a quality permanently remaining in the soul. This is so, because unlike the instrumental power communicated transiently whereby man works miracles, the character is a participation in the Priesthood of Christ; not therefore precisely a participation in divine power, since Christ is a Priest as He is man, not as He is God. The power communicated to men whereby they cooperate in the priestly works of Christ is therefore subordinate to a human power of Christ. Moreover, and this is essential for understanding the nature of the character, the character is not precisely a principle of grace, but a principle whereby the signs instituted by Christ can produce grace. As the miracle worker "carries the intention" of God to the miraculous operation, so the "characterized" man carries in virtue of his character the intention of Christ to the sign instituted by Christ making it in the concrete productive of grace.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 62, aa. 5 and 6.

⁵⁷ *Sum. Theol.*, q. 63, a. 1, ad 3: *Sacramenta veteris legis non habebant in se spiritualem virtutem ad aliquem spiritualem effectum operandum; et ideo in illis sacramentis non requirebatur aliquis spiritualis character, sed sufficebat ibi corporalis circumcisio.*

⁵⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 8, ad 1: *Instrumentum animatum, sicut minister non solum movetur sed etiam quodammodo movet seipsum in quantum sua voluntate movet membra ad operandum; et ideo requiritur ejus intentio, qua se subjiciat principali agenti ut scilicet intendat facere quod facit Christus et Ecclesia*

It is clear, then, that the character respects directly the outward sign that causes sacramental grace, not the grace itself.⁵⁹ Although the character is concerned primarily and directly with the administration and reception of the sacraments, it is true nevertheless that it is by reason of the character that these outward signs are constituted in their sacramental being: that is, are made signs which are productive of the grace they signify. St. Thomas, therefore, does not speak so much of the character as being concerned with the sacraments as with those things that pertain to divine worship according to the rite of the Christian religion, thus combining the double relation of the character: to the sign and, through the sign, to grace.

The sacraments of the Christian religion—in which divine worship now principally consists—are distinguished in the fact that their use of itself can justify men.⁶⁰ This fact shows that the protestation of faith which the sacraments essentially are is an acknowledgment that the sacrament is capable of accomplishing the salutary effects of Christ's Passion. The intention, then, that operates in the reception or administration of the Christian sacraments is not precisely an intention to receive or to administer but an intention that is operating in the actual reception or administration. It is the intention in execution, not the intention that is elicited in regard to an end to be accomplished. The intention then, operating in the performing or receiving of the sacraments is more precisely the "*imperium*." Hence the commentators of St. Thomas unanimously speak of the character as operating in the order of execution, not in the order of inten-

⁵⁹ Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, Vol. IX, Disp. XXV, art. 2, CXXXIII: Sicut in humanitate Christi aliud est esse conjunctum divinitati, aliud active se habere ad effectum per motionem instrumentalem; sic in ministris Christi aliud est ei conjunctos et configuratos quod permanenter habent per characterem, aliud activitatem habere instrumentalem quod fit per motionem. Per characterem ergo non datur activitas ad effectum sacramentorum qui producitur instrumentaliter, sed validitas ad actus ut non sint nulli sed validi in genere sacramentali.

⁶⁰ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 62, art. 6, ad 1: Antiqui patres habebant fidem de passione Christi futura quae secundum quod erat in apprehensione animae poterat justificare; sed nos habemus fidem de passione Christi praecedenti, quae potest justificare secundum *usum realem* sacramentalium rerum.

tion.⁶¹ This intention is elevated by virtue of the character, which is a participation in the priesthood of Christ, to have the force of Christ's intention, and hence renders the sacramental sign valid, that is, efficacious for the causation of sacramental grace.

Since the character is not concerned directly with the causation of grace, but with the causation of grace as it is produced by the sacramental sign, it can be seen how it is possible to have a passive power, which is, nevertheless, a participation in the priesthood of Christ. There is no special difficulty in seeing how the character which is an active power cooperates in the work of Christ's Priesthood; the human intention, as it were, receives the intention of Christ and "carries" it to the sacramental sign in virtue of which the sacrament causes grace. If the fact that the character is concerned immediately with the sacramental rite is not emphasized, one will have difficulty in seeing that a passive power can be a configuration to Christ the Priest, since Christ's priestly intention is not to receive grace but to give it.⁶² The character which is a passive power is related to the sacramental rite as making it productive of grace in the soul which receives it.⁶³ Thus the passive power "carries the intention" of Christ the Priest to the sacramental sign, but in a different way than the active power. The active power makes the sacramental sign valid, that is, productive of its sacramental effects; whereas the passive power might be said

⁶¹ Cf., e. g., *Salmanticenses*, tract. XXII, Disp. V, dub. III, n. 57: Character non ponitur a nobis principium cognitionis speculativae, sed practicae, nempe illius imperii quo intellectus movet alias potentias tam internas quam externas ad actus eidem characteri correspondentes, ut sunt debita intentio in suscipiendo et ministrando sacramenta atque externa et legitima eorum administratio.

⁶² Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 22, a. 4: Primum enim agens in quolibet genere ita est influens quod non est recipiens in genere illo; . . . Christus autem est fons totius sacerdotii . . . et ideo non competit Christo effectum sacerdotii recipere.

⁶³ *Salmanticenses*, tract. XXII, Disp. V, dub. II, n. 42: Nihil refert quod character baptismi sit in uno subjecto et quod sacramenta recipiantur in alio: semper enim cerificatur hominem non esse aptum ad recipiendum sacramenta in corpore nisi habeat characterem in anima. Et addimus sacramenta ita recipi in corpore quod nihilominus habent virtutem physicam commutandi animam per gratiam; quare egent ex parte animae potentia passiva, quae est per characterem baptismi.

to validate the recipient, i. e., render him capable of the effects that are produced by the external rite.

The passive power, therefore, receives the intention of Christ in a twofold manner: insofar as it makes the soul capable of receiving the effects of the sacramental sign by receiving the external rite with a fortified or "characterized" intention⁶⁴ and insofar as the soul by reason of this elevated operation actually receives the effects intended by Christ to be given through the sacraments. In the former instance the character operates instrumentally. It carries the intention of Christ to the sacramental sign, but as an intention of receiving the sacramental effects, not as an intention of causing them for others. Without this characterized intention, no effect could be obtained from the sacraments: it is therefore truly a cause of the sacramental effect, but since the intention is that of a recipient, it demands an active power by which the sacrament is constituted a cause of the effects which the passive power renders the subject capable of receiving. Since, however, the passive power actually cooperates in bringing the effects of Christ's Passion to the soul, it can be seen that such a power is rightly called a participation in the priesthood of Christ, even though it is an essentially different participation from that conferred by the active power.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Cum character ordinetur ad cultum Dei secundum ritum Christianae religionis consistentem principaliter in susceptionibus et administrationibus sacramentorum; in illa potentia debet immediate recipi quae habet vim imperandi movendi alias potentias: ergo haec potentia est subjectum recipiens immediate characterem. Unde facile intelligitur characterem baptismi recipi in intellectu practico communicando ejus imperio efficaciam ut alias potentias moveat ad validam receptionem ceterorum sacramentorum.

⁶⁵ Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theol.*, Vol. IX, Disp. XXV, art. II, dub. II, n. CXXIV: Si dicas quod omnis character est potestas passiva, quia habet activitatem respectu instrumentalis concursus et motionis respondetur quod character non datur in ordine ad instrumentalem motionem ut ad proprium actum (quia etiamsi non daretur physica motio instrumentalis, adhuc daretur character) sed in ordine ad ea quae sunt protestationes divini cultus, et actiones sacras exercendas; et in his vel passive se habent vel active; ad operandum autem instrumentaliter semper passive se habent; sed non ad operandum ministerialiter et sacramentaliter, quia in aliquibus configurantur Christo agendo, in aliis recipiendo.

From this fact of the necessity of a passive power for the reception of the sacraments, one can gain further insight into the fact that the teaching of St. Thomas relative to the distinction of sanctifying and sacramental grace is closely linked to his doctrine of the character as an instrumental potency. Thus the sacraments of the Old Law did not cause sacramental grace (which adds something over and above sanctifying grace) because they were not instrumental causes of grace.⁶⁶ Because the sacraments of the New Law physically cause grace, and because that grace adds something to sanctifying grace, a disposition (that is, a potency) is required to make the soul capable of receiving such grace.⁶⁷ It is very significant therefore that it is in the third article of the sixty-third question that St. Thomas distinguishes the sacramental character, which is the mark of Christ, from sanctifying grace, which is the mark of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁸ Man is naturally capable of grace,⁶⁹ but he requires a further disposition to be capable of sacramental grace.⁷⁰ This further disposition is his passive power of receiving the sacraments.

These considerations of the phrase, "divine worship according to the rite of the Christian religion," and the nature of the instrumentality exercised by the active and passive characters

⁶⁶ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 62, a. 6, cf. also, q. 70, a. 4: Et quia baptismus operatur instrumentaliter in virtute passionis Christi, non autem circumcisio, ideo baptismus imprimit characterem incorporantem hominem Christo et *copiosiore* gratiam confert quam circumcisio; major enim est effectus rei quam spei.

⁶⁷ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 1, ad 3: Sacramenta veteris legis non habebant in se spirituales virtutes ad aliquem spirituales effectum operandum; et ideo in illis sacramentis non requirebatur aliquis spiritualis character, sed sufficiebat ibi corporalis circumcisio. Cf. IV, Sent., Dist. IV, q. 1, art. 4, q. 1, ad 2: Sacramenta veteris legis ex opere operato nihil conferebant, et ideo illae actiones non requirebant spirituales potestates; et ideo nec ab illis, nec ad illa imprimebatur character.

⁶⁸ Cf. art. 3, ad 1.

⁶⁹ *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q. 113, a. 10: Naturaliter animae est gratiae capax; eo enim ipso quod facta est ad imaginem Dei capax est Dei per gratiam, ut Augustinus dicit. Cf. M. Mathis, O.P. "Quomodo Anima Humana sit 'Naturaliter Capax Gratiae' Secundum Doctrinam S. Thomae," in *Angelicum*, Vol. XIV (1937), pp. 178-193.

⁷⁰ Cf. A. Horvath, O.P., "De Influxu Christi in Evolutione Imaginis Dei," *Angelicum*, Vol. VI (1929), pp. 125-141.

in distributing the effects of Christ's Passion will render more understandable the doctrine of St. Thomas that the characters are configurations to the priesthood of Christ. The orderliness of St. Thomas' procedure will also be revealed. In the first article of the sixty-third question, it will be recalled, St. Thomas determines that the sacraments of the New Law are rightly said to mark the soul of a recipient with a spiritual character. In the second article he determines that this spiritual mark is an instrumental potency. In the third article he asks, "Whose character is this?"

Now since it has already been determined by St. Thomas that the character is both a sign and an instrumental potency, this question can have two meanings: first, it can have the meaning: Who uses this character to mark men? In this sense the question is a pursuit of the efficient cause of the character, and abstracts from the question of the character's being either a purely distinctive sign, or a natural one. That St. Thomas is not asking the question in this sense can be seen in a comparison of this article (q. 63, a. 3) with the first article of the following question. In the first article of the sixty-fourth question it is evident that St. Thomas is speaking of the character as it is an effect of the sacraments, not as a potency that operates.⁷¹ Here, however, it is evident that he is concerned with the character precisely as a potency that operates. Its efficient cause then will be more precisely its principal cause—the cause in virtue of whose influence the character operates, not the cause in virtue of which it exists.

The question "whose character is this" can also mean "to

⁷¹ Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 1: The question asked is whether God alone works interiorly toward the effect of the sacraments. The answer in part: *Respondeo dicendum quod operari aliquem effectum contingit dupliciter: uno modo per modum principalis agentis, alio modo per modum instrumenti. Primo igitur modo solus Deus operatur interiorem effectum sacramenti, tum quia solus Deus illabitur animae in qua sacramenti effectus existit; . . . tum quia gratia, quae est interior sacramenti effectus est a solo Deo. . . . Character etiam qui est interior quorundam sacramentorum effectus est virtus instrumentalis, quae manat a principali agente, quod est Deus. Secundo autem modo homo potest operari ad interiorem effectum sacramenti, in quantum operatur per modum ministri.*

whom does this character configure." This is the question of the relationship of the character to its principal cause. Verbally, it is a question regarding the exemplary cause. Nevertheless, the relationship of the character to its exemplary cause can only be determined after the principal cause has been determined. The question, then, is a pursuit primarily of the principal cause of the character (as distinguished from its efficient cause) and secondarily of the exemplary cause. The character will, however, respect its exemplar in the way proper to its nature or potency. The relationship of the character to its exemplar will be described after the argument in this third article has been considered.

The first thing to be remarked in an attempt to understand the doctrine contained in this article is that the argument in the *Sed Contra* should not be separated from that given in the body of the article. In the *Sed Contra* St. Thomas invokes the authority of the magistral definition to prove that the character is to be attributed to Christ.⁷² Were one to consider the *Sed Contra* alone, one might be led into the impression that St. Thomas is teaching that the "eternal and invisible Image" of the Father is the cause of the sacramental character. This may well have been the mind of the author of the magistral definition, and the mind of the predecessors of St. Thomas, but the teaching of the Angelic Doctor in the body of this article shows that it is not his. The conclusion of St. Thomas is that the sacramental characters are configurative to Christ insofar as they are participations in His priesthood. Now, Christ is a priest, not as He is God, but as He is man.⁷³ Therefore the efficient or principal cause of the sacramental character is not precisely the Eternal Character, but the visible manifestation of that Eternal

⁷² *Sed contra* est quod quidam sic definiunt characterem: Character est distinctio a characterē aeterno impressa animae rationali, secundum imaginem, consignans trinitatem creatam Trinitati creati et recreanti, et distinguens a non configuratis secundum statum fidei. Sed character aeternus est ipse Christus, secundum illud Hebr. 1, 3: Qui cum sit splendor gloriae, et figura (character) substantiae ejus. Ergo videtur quod character sit proprie attribuendus Christo.

⁷³ Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 22, a. 2.

and Invisible Image.⁷⁴ This point represents the basic difference between St. Thomas' concept of configuration and that of his predecessors. It will be necessary, therefore, to examine the body of the article in detail.

St. Thomas first sums up the previous articles of this sixty-third question. He begins by recalling the essential nature of a character. It is, he says, a sign whereby someone or something is assigned a function: for instance, there is the stamp upon metal making it a medium of exchange, and in ancient times a mark was inscribed upon a man sent out to fight for his country. Now, the sacraments depute men to certain goals. Primarily they depute men to the enjoyment of heaven when they impress upon the soul the mark of divine grace, the seed of glory. Man, however, is also deputed to a temporal function: the worship of God according to the rite of the Christian religion, and it is to this function that man is assigned in the reception of a sacramental character. Since the worship of God in the Christian economy consists mainly in the administration and reception of the sacraments, the character is, therefore, either a passive or active ability in regard to them. Now, continues the Angelic Doctor, the entire rite of Christian worship is derived from the priesthood of Christ. Therefore, he concludes, the sacramental characters, ordained as they are to the worship of God according to the rite of the Christian religion, are participations in the priesthood of Christ. The answer, therefore, to the question, "whose character is this" is simply, Christ the Priest's.

To understand the notion of configuration of which St. Thomas is speaking, it must constantly be kept in mind that the character is an instrumental potency. Therefore the like-

⁷⁴ Cf. Horvath, *op. cit.*, p. 125: *Regalem potestatem Christi intime cohaerere cum sacerdotali, imo ab ipsa fluere necnon ab illa determinationem quandam soli huic regalitati propriam recipere universaliter notum est. . . . Haec tamen suprema potestas regia distincta est ab illa quae convenit illi ex eo quod sit Unigenitus Patris et imago invisibilis Dei. Inde enim haec regalitas solum rationem habet quod Christus sit primogenitus ex mortuis, imago visibilis, caput corporis Ecclesiae, principium salutis, in quo et per quod Deus sibi reconciliavit omnia, pacificans per sanguinem crucis ejus, sive quae in terris sive quae in coelis sunt.*

ness of the character is found in the fact that the function of the character is to produce the works of Christ, works which, properly, are not to be attributed to the character, nor to the one who possesses the character, but to Him who works through the character, namely, Christ the Priest. Christ the Priest, therefore, may be said to be the exemplary cause of the character in the same wide sense that the sacramental character, according to its proper nature, can be called a sign.⁷⁵ In the rigor of technical language however, Christ the Priest is the principal cause of the character, that is, the cause under whose influence the character produces the work of Christ's priesthood, the sanctification of men.

All Christians, therefore, can be said to participate in the priesthood of Christ. Some participate passively in the twofold sense that they receive the effect of Christ's sacrificial act, namely grace,⁷⁶ and also in the sense that through Baptism they receive a capability of worshiping God through the reception of the Christian sacraments.⁷⁷ The character is therefore a sign insofar as it unites its recipient to Christ the Priest. It is not in the genus of sign, however, as is the sacrament, which impresses the character, but rather in the genus of potency or cause.⁷⁸

The principle whereby St. Thomas concludes that the sacramental characters are participations in the priesthood of Christ is, then, that the characters are instrumental potencies. Therefore the characters are participations in the sense that men through them participate in Christ's causation of the sacramental effects. The participation, therefore, of which St. Thomas is principally speaking in the third article is a participation in action, not precisely a participation in an exemplar.

Men do participate in Christ the Priest, however, as in an exemplar inasmuch as their characters are permanent qualities. By reason of this permanence, men can be said to be consecrated

⁷⁵ Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 1 ad 2.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, a. 6, ad 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, a. 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, a. 2, ad 4.

to the redemptive work of Christ, as the Humanity of Christ by reason of the Hypostatic Union is consecrated to the work of Redemption.⁷⁹ If Christ worked his sacramental effects through men merely by assuming them into His operations they would be configured to Him in operation, since they would produce His works. Since, however, they possess a permanent quality in virtue of which Christ uses them, they can be said to be configured to Him according to their characters.

It is important to remember in speaking of Christ as the exemplar of the characterized man that the characters are instrumental potencies—ordained, in cooperation with Christ, to produce the works of His Priesthood. Therefore, even in his static condition (when his character is not operating) the characterized man is configured to the actions of Christ, since by reason of his character he stands physically related to them. The configuration of the character is the configuration that a moved cause has to its mover; a configuration or participation in the order of efficient causality. This is true even of the character as it is a permanent quality, since it is a quality that is reductively a potency—therefore having a relation to a principal cause. The character therefore configures to Christ as He is a Priest, that is to say, as He is the primary (instrumental) cause of the sanctification of men.

The difference between the configuration of the character and the conformity of grace⁸⁰ is chiefly to be discerned from this fact: grace is a habit perfecting the soul in its being and its own proper operation whereas the character is an instrumental potency. Grace effects in the soul of man an immediate participation in the life of God, without, however, destroying the proper and therefore meritorious causality of the secondary cause in which it resides and which it perfects. The ultimate exemplar of grace, therefore, is the life of the Blessed Trinity, not Christ as He is man. Christ, as man, is also sanctified by

⁷⁹ Cf. Heris, O.P., *Le Mystère du Christ*.

⁸⁰ St. Thomas uses this terminology without explaining it further in III, q. 69, a. 9, ad 1.

habitual grace, which elevates his human soul to an immediate participation in the divine life, and makes it capable of the beatific vision. Christ's Humanity, as it is sanctified by habitual grace, is, however, the exemplar of souls sanctified by grace in the limited sense that His Humanity is the most perfectly sanctified of creatures. Christ the priest, however, is the ultimate exemplar of the characterized man (considering the character as a permanent quality or consecration) since His Humanity possesses by reason of the Hypostatic Union what the characterized man possesses in a limited degree.⁸¹ Thus St. Thomas in treating of the indelibility of the character explains the relation of the character as it is a permanent quality to the Priesthood of Christ:

The sacramental character is a certain participation of the priesthood of Christ in his faithful, so that, namely, just as Christ has the full power of a spiritual priesthood, so his faithful share some spiritual power in regard to the sacraments and those things which pertain to divine worship. And it is on this account also that it does not belong to Christ to have a character, but the power of his priesthood is compared to the character as that which is complete and perfect to some participation of it.⁸²

When it is remembered that this quotation is taken from the article dealing with the character as a permanent quality, and not in its precise formality of instrument, everything that has

⁸¹ Cf. John of St. Thomas, Disp. XXV, art. 3, n. IV: Itaque in exemplaritate et participatione character respicit sacerdotium Christi et consequenter Christum secundum quod homo; in quo differt a gratia quae est immediata participatio naturae divinae; et ideo non respicit gratiam Christi aut Christum secundum homo in participatione et exemplaritate. At vero in efficientia character est effective a tota Trinitate, et ab humanitate Christi solum instrumentaliter, sicut alia supernaturaliter dona; et sic dici potest character Trinitatis effective, Christi autem participative et exemplariter.

⁸² *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 5: Character sacramentalis est quaedam participatio sacerdotii Christi in fidelibus ejus, ut scilicet sicut Christus habet plenam spiritualis sacerdotii potestatem ita fideles ejus participant aliquam spiritualem potestatem respectu sacramentorum et eorum quae pertinent ad cultum divinum. Et propterea hoc etiam Christo non competit habere characterem, sed potestas sacerdotii ejus comparatur ad characterem sicut id quod est plenum et perfectum ad aliquam sui participationem.

been said of the character as a configuration is summed up. The likeness effected in the soul by the sacramental character is a participation in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is a participation in the efficient order—the participation of the moved in the mover. Insofar, however, as the character is permanent, this participation in the priesthood of Christ can be considered in the formal order, so that the character can be said to set apart or consecrate its recipient for the sanctification of men as a subordinate instrument just as the Hypostatic Union sets apart the Humanity of Christ as the Primary Instrument.

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THE SEARCH FOR THE INTELLIGIBLE GOOD



ARISTOTLE'S definition of the good as that which all things desire is acceptable in any of the historic philosophies except the materialistic. Men of good will and philosophic vision have always been able to attain to the concept of the Immanent *or* the Transcendent Good. However, it is only in Judaeo-Christian thought that there has been any development of the concept of the Immanent *and* Transcendent Good, the God Who loves all things¹ as well as the Good whom all things love. Eastern theologies, whether indigenous or transplanted to the West, find the immanent good of natural existence a perpetual stumbling-block in the rise to the Transcendent One. On the other hand, Western theology, when separated from Messianic thought, either before or after Christ, never succeeds in making a systematic identification of the Immanent and the Transcendent Good. When Heraclitus discovered the Everlasting Logos, he found it only as a principle immanent in the flux. And the sovereignty held by the Platonic ideas over the realm of being is ordained to the perpetual renewal of the *temporal* order. Even the One of the *Parmenides* is still involved in the Heraclitian flux at the end of the dialogue in spite of all the Pythagorean and Eleatic rationalism which has gone before.

Aristotle, alone of all non-Messianic thinkers, succeeded in achieving a statement of true transcendence and a statement of true immanence. But by restricting the contemplation of God to the Mind of God, Aristotle also fails to identify the Transcendent and the Immanent Good. The universe of Aristotle is moved by God to the Good. It is not moved for and in God, as it is to St. Paul. To Aristotle, no less than to Plato, the forms found in nature are to be perpetually renewed. Once

¹ *The Book of Wisdom*, 11, 25.

away from the First Mover, they have a completely autonomous life of their own.

The Platonic insistence that the truly real is the ideal sets the historical pattern of Western idealism by becoming the scepticism of the Middle and New Academies. Meanwhile, under the influence of Theophrastus, Peripateticism devoted itself to the exploration of the natural sciences. The search for the Good was continued in the Alexandrine age only by the Stoics. Moreover the Stoic emphasis on the doctrine of Providence gave to their concept of God a realism in theology which only the Hebrews had asserted previously. To the Stoics evil is not the inevitable result of natural imperfection, as in Plato and Aristotle. The concept of evil is rather the product of human ignorance. This doctrine is, of course, an extension to the physical world of the Socratic doctrine of moral evil. And it amounts to the broadening of a basic error rather than a basic truth.

The denial of intrinsic imperfection is, of course, the weak point in the Stoic dialectic. But the important point for the history of the search for the Good is the unyielding Stoic insistence that *all* reality is reducible to a Divine Purpose. Neither the early nor the later Stoics were ever able to support their statements of the Providence of God by any arguments except *ad hominem*. They did, of course, revive the Socratic argument from Design. But to the inescapable question: why is the Design so obviously imperfect from the human point of view, the Stoics could say only that it is the human point of view which is imperfect. That is good rhetoric but it does not answer the objection. The Stoics maintained the doctrine of Providence against their opponents. But they did not establish it.

After two centuries of controversy with Epicureans, Peripatetics, and sceptics, the Stoic position was synthesized with Pythagorean mysticism by the Stoic Posidonius. The resulting Neo-Pythagoreanism attained a considerable influence until it was finally absorbed by the Neo-Platonic school. But the union of Stoicism and mysticism was made at the expense of the basic Stoic orientation toward nature as good in itself. And

Epictetus revived an historically pure Stoicism by insisting that philosophy must be practical, not mystical.

The eclecticism of Posidonius is typical of the last two centuries of pre-Christian Hellenism. But the most important of the eclectics is, of course, Cicero. With true Roman impartiality Cicero gives audiences in his *De Natura Deorum* to all the flourishing systems of his period. First, with characteristic universalism, he propounds the argument for the existence of God from the common consent of mankind. Then he calls on the philosophers for a practical ethic. But he finds the Epicurean non-social, the Stoic non-human, the Peripatetic committed to the unstable goods of fortune. He reminds us that Carneades had decided against the Oneness of God because men had worshipped too many different gods. What, then, does the high-minded but practical Roman do? He will not renounce the search for the good. But for him the only verifiable good is the *bonum honestum*, the ethos of men of goodwill. And this, historically speaking, is the end of the search for the Good by unenlightened natural wisdom. If there is a God it is time for Him to manifest Himself to men.

It is a well-established assumption of modern religious criticism that Christian theology is a syncretism of preceding systems, a rationalization of the "simple" message of Christ. But this assumption cannot survive an historically informed and alert reading of the Gospel of St. Matthew. For the God Who marks the fall of the sparrow and Who numbers the hairs of our heads² is completely different from the God of any of the Hellenes or the Hellenists. The God of St. Matthew loves His creatures as individuals, not as idealized participants in the universal scheme of things. He is not the inevitably forgetful Designer of the *Timaeus* nor the indifferent God of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. He is not the Heraclitian Logos of the Stoics, alternately renewing and relapsing the flux forever; nor the completely transcendent One of Plotinus, Who must have a hierarchy of beings in which the lowest can ascend to the High-

² St. Matthew, X, 29 & 30.

est but the Highest can never descend to the lowest. For God made all things and He made each one for Himself. Revelation was not only necessary to sustain natural ethics, as the Church proclaims. It was also necessary to enlighten metaphysics.

The metaphysical enlightenment which is the distinctive note of Christian philosophy is not only the Law of Reason to which Hellenism was committed. It is also the Law of Love which derives from the historical Christ. God is not only the Good which all things desire. He is also the Good which desires all things. Christ fulfilled the Law of the Covenant. He also transformed the Logos of the sages.

Unlike Athena, Christian philosophy did not spring full-grown from the Mind of God. It is, indeed, still growing. But it is still rooted in the Joannine Logos, the historical Christ, Who is One with the Father in a Love Who also exists eternally as a Third Person. The revelation that the Godhead is also ordained to the Law of Love makes the doctrine of the Immanent and Transcendent Good hardly more than a commonplace for Christian theology. And until the doctrine of the Trinity had been defined authoritatively, the purely philosophical implications of the Law of Love and Reason were not too carefully articulated. Even then the working of grace is clearly evident. For it was in the throes of his conversion from Manicheanism that St. Augustine was able to restate definitively the principle: *omne ens est bonum*.

The restatement by St. Augustine of the basic Christian metaphysic was actually the formulation of a new and profound attainment of the intelligible good. This is the doctrine of the *degrees of perfection*. Things as they exist are good. But they are only *relatively* good. They are not completely perfect because God did not make them so. They are not *bonum per se*. But they are *bonum in se*. There is no *fundamental* defect in things, as Plato had taught. For being *in se* is good, although it is not good *per se*. Thus St. Augustine triumphed over the Hellenists and the heresiarchs not only because he knew the Law of Love but because he also understood the Law of Reason better than they.

The Augustinian doctrine of the degrees of perfection has itself been restated by many Christian philosophers from Boethius to Berkeley. It remains a basic insight in the continuing search for the good. Even though Augustinianism yielded to Thomism after nine hundred years of dominance in Western thought, St. Thomas is thoroughly Augustinian in his doctrine of the intelligibility of the Good. For the momentuous discovery of Augustine gathered impetus from Boethius, Anselm, and Albert to become an integral part of the Thomistic system in the Fourth Argument for the existence of God. Moreover, while Aquinas uses Aristotle's principle of "no regress to infinity" in his presentation of the argument, he uses Augustine's doctrine of the omnipotence of God deriving good from evil to answer the second of the two objections which he considers pertinent against the existence of God.

Scotus, however, departs from St. Augustine in his treatment of the intelligibility of the Good. St. Thomas proves the omnipotence of God by a dialectic purely rational.³ But it is a rationalism informed by the Augustinian insight that being as such is good. Scotus denies explicitly that the omnipotence of God can be established by rational inquiry.⁴ We must *believe* the doctrine of the omnipotence of God, says Scotus, although we cannot prove it. But the rational inquiry of Scotus fails of an affirmative solution because he declines to reaffirm the historic doctrine of the intrinsic but relative goodness of all natural existence. He claims that he is taking the Creed in its truest sense by insisting on the necessity of *believing* in the omnipotence of God rather than claiming that the truth is demonstrable. But this is a grave misunderstanding of the historic function of Christian philosophy. The Logos is a Light shining in darkness. And Christian philosophy is a leap in the Light, not in the dark. If faith is not fundamentally reasonable it is vain. Even the mystery of the Trinity, once revealed, does not defy rational analysis, as the philosophy of St. Bonaventure shows most excellently. The failure of Scotus to find natural

³ *Summa Theologica*, I, 25, 3.

⁴ *Opus Oxoniense*, I, 42, 1.

reason attunable to natural existence on a much more fundamental question of *natural* theology reveals clearly an important defect in the system of Scotus. That defect is its basically non-existential character.

The effect of the denial by Scotus of the demonstrability of Omnipotence is immediately apparent in Ockham. Like F. H. Bradley's Absolute, Omnipotence becomes for Ockham an *enfant terrible* whose insistent claims must be recognized because we are unable to silence them. Eventually Laplace was to assert that he had silenced those insistent claims of Omnipotence. But for a long time after Ockham, Omnipotence was still a datum of dialectic. However the work of the fideists from Nicholas de Ultra-Curia to Montaigne is not our present concern. And it was not until the time of Descartes that the demonstration of the Omnipotence of God was again attempted by natural wisdom.

Descartes' proof of the omnipotence of God is irrefutable within the framework of the simple dualistic system of Descartes. If spirit and matter are the fundamental dichotomies of existence and if man is fundamentally a spirit, his continued existence as such leads inevitably to the existence of an Infinite Power. As Descartes himself puts it:

It is perfectly manifest that in this question of the existence of God there can be no regression into infinity, since what is in question is not so much the cause which formerly created me, as that which conserves me at the present time.⁵

But it is "perfectly manifest" only if one concedes in advance the continued existence of the *spirit* of man in a material world. Quite obviously, therefore, the materialistic attack on Cartesianism took the position of maintaining the basic and undistinctive materiality of all knowable existence. Yet it was Descartes who had maintained the undistinctive materiality of purely mundane existence, excluding only the spirit of man from his dictum. If Cartesianism has done nothing else, it has

⁵ *Descartes' Selections*. Edited by Ralph M. Eaton. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York: 1927, p. 124.

shown that, historically as well as intrinsically, a basic pluralism is a necessity for Christian philosophy. The almost inevitable development of Cartesianism which was formulated by Spinoza is another indication of this. For the monism of Spinoza closely approximates that of the great Hindu thinkers in spite of its rigorous mathematical dialectic. But it is completely alien to the Hebraic wisdom which had transformed the West.

The pluralism of Leibniz, however, is recognizably Augustinian. In St. Augustine the complete dependence of the universe on God is forever emphasized. In Leibniz complete dependence of the individual being on God *and complete independence of all others* is developed by using the Cartesian principle of the metaphysical insufficiency of secondary causes. Thus with Leibniz the entire universe is converted to Protestantism. For to him each individual being is both self-integrated and immediately in harmony with the universe by the direct action of God. Not only *can* nothing come between God and the individual being. *Nothing can even try to do so.* This is the unyielding individualism of Ockham combined with the divinely participating individualism of Scotus. But Leibniz does not derive his individualism from the dialectic necessity of Ockham nor from the Scotistic view of the Divine simplicity of creation. Leibniz gets his individualism from his radically dynamic pluralism. However, in order to view the universe as a whole, he proposes his famous Principles of Continuity and Concomitance, by which each individual is not only *bonum in se* but also *bonum in commune*.

To attain in one magnificent vision both the *bonum in se* and the *bonum in commune* is the unceasing task of Christian philosophy. Leibniz achieved it by a method at once radically individualistic and radically mathematical. However, Cartesian and post-Cartesian idealism came to its inevitable scepticism in Hume, the ambidextrous disciple of Berkeley and Malebranche. And modern thought, from Hume to Whitehead, has denied the God of Leibniz. But it remains intrigued by the

Leibnizian vision of the mathematical and pluralistic Good. It is highly doubtful that the cosmological optimism of Leibniz will be revived. For the anthropomorphism of eighteenth-century Deism still prevails in non-Catholic theology. But current idealism and current realism now manifest an Hegelian synthesis describable as Meliorism—to use a thought of William James.

Meliorism is an eclectic modification of Leibnizian optimism. In denying Leibniz' postulate that the universe is the best it could be because God *would* not make it otherwise, modernistic thought maintains that, since the world *could* be better, therefore it *should* be better. Since God has not accepted this Categorical Imperative, theistic modernism has decided that He is not the Summum Bonum of Kant—yet. Post-Kantian idealism set the basic pattern of Meliorism by making the Absolute merely super-human, as in Fichte; infra-rational or supra-rational, as in Schelling; merely rational, as in Hegel; and necessarily finite, as in Bradley. On the other hand, theistic empiricism has reacted against Humanism in Reid's doctrine of the validity of common experience. But Hamilton restricted Reid's doctrine to the philosophy of nature, insisting that only Kant's moral argument for the Summum Bonum has validity.⁶ Against Hamilton's merely moralistic theism, Mill first maintained that if there is a God He is knowable in common experience at least analogically.⁷ But eventually Mill could envision no more than a finite God, if any.⁸ The finitism of Mill and Bradley are only nominally the same, however, since Bradley is always sure of his Absolute and Mill can get along with or without God. The final formulation of Reidian Common Sensism into the Unknowable of Spencer made empiricism and theism no longer reconcilable for modernist thought, if merely

⁶ *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*. Harper & Bros., New York: 1853, pp. 585-590.

⁷ *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*. William V. Spencer, Boston: 1866, Vol. I, pp. 129-131.

⁸ *Three Essays on Religion*. Edited by H. Taylor. Henry Holt and Sons, New York: 1874.

experiential rationalism is followed. But the American philosopher C. S. Peirce had proceeded from "Critical Common-Sensism" to propose the doctrine of common *scientific* experience which is the "working" epistemology of our present culture. Peirce thereby outlined the scientific pragmatism which soon became, among other things, current realism.

Peirce worked out a metaphysic which is historically interesting. More realistic than Leibniz and under the influence of evolutionism, he proposed a continuum which is potentially infinite, not actually infinite, as with Leibnitz. Peirce, moreover, accepted according to his mode his Joannine heritage of Law as Love. But he found Love operative only in the dynamism of individualism indiscriminately tending toward a greater and greater pluralism. Finding no evidence of Transcendent Love Peirce had recourse to Casuism to account for the *limited* perfection he found in the existential universe. This amounts to a substitution of Love and Luck for Love and Reason. But since rationalism from Descartes to Bradley and Spencer had been unable to achieve an historically satisfactory vision of the universe, even a Love dependent on Luck would seem worthy of consideration.

However, James and Dewey have made only a humanistic Meliorism out of Peirce. And one of his editors, Paul Weiss, has proposed his own version of the Absolute while still recognizing the Casuism of Peirce.⁹ Apparently the Melioristic pattern of modern thought is not to be denied.

Meliorism finds its current metaphysical basis in the doctrine of the indeterminism of being, just as it finds its historical progenitor in the epistemically indeterminate Hume. And now that Scholastic philosophers have generally revised that historic system to accommodate the theory of metaphysical indeterminism, Scholastic epistemology also begins to show tendencies toward indeterminacy. This is a development to be expected. For, however insistently one may maintain that the natural form and the mental representation of that form are

⁹ *Reality*. Princeton Press, Princeton: 1938.

separate orders of being, a realistic epistemology must, by its very realism, be modified by the accepted theory of natural form. We may, then, note quite pertinently that the general theory of the indeterminism of natural forms, with its historic roots in the mental indeterminacy of Hume, appears to be a Grecian gift to Scholastic thought. For Scholasticism is committed to the intrinsic knowability of things as they are, because, such as they are, God made them and saw that they were good.

Of course no adherent of Scholasticism has accepted the indiscriminate pluralism of modern evolutionism. But the historic Scholastic recognition of an immense variety of knowable natural forms has been narrowed in its current viewpoint by an increasing commitment to the general theory of evolution. However, a commitment to evolutionism has become less and less indicated by the accumulated findings of natural science since Pasteur disproved spontaneous generation and biology made its belated verification of the Mendelian Laws. The autonomy of vitalistic processes, which is from Pasteur, and the autonomy of specific vital process, which is from Mendel, are not disputable on the basis of verified technical data. They are disputable only on the basis of scientific "fallibilism," the hypothesis that since we don't know everything, therefore we don't know anything.

I do not, of course, maintain that biological genera and species are as rigidly distinguishable as historic Aristotelian science once found them to be. The colloids, the crystalline viruses, the locomotive plants and the carnivorous plants—certainly these have made Porphyry's tree and Bergsonian vitalism no longer useful. Also, the extent of possible variations within the various species and the enlargement of the limits of particular species make engrossing problems for the geneticists. But a non-specific mutation, a newly-autonomous form, is still no more than wishful thinking.

In the purely inorganic domain also the authentic pluralism of natural form is undeniable. Even if the dreams of the

modern alchemists come true and material substance is shown as demonstrably monotype, we shall still have, as existential forms, the half-million molecules, the ninety atoms, the sub-atomic particles, and the several rays. Moreover, the formal identity of the hydrogen proton with the "protons" which are assumed to be in the other elements is yet to be established systematically.

It is true, of course, that natural forms existed once which no longer exist. It is also true that current organic forms once did not exist, according to our best available knowledge. This may be true even of inorganic forms. Again, it is possible to point out recognizable patterns of life with a history of ascent and descent. But it is also possible to point out patterns of life with no such history. Nevertheless, the search for the countless missing links still goes on. But the continuum, Leibnizian, Hegelian, or Peircian, is an assumption whose fruitfulness becomes more and more questionable except in mathematical reasoning. For the existential universe is radically *discontinuous*. The individual existents which compose the universe are independent as well as interdependent. They have their own intrinsic continuity, not altogether continuous with the rest of their species nor the rest of the universe. Moreover, the interrelations which do exist indicate that the processes of the universe are saltatory and not serial. Men think otherwise only when their minds move in levels of abstraction not continuously informed by the richness of individual existence.

Thus, Leibnizian monadism, in spite of its orientation from the individual as dynamic, renders obscure the pluralism which it also proclaims. For, since the individual only *reflects* the concomitant action of the Divine Causality on the other individuals in the universe, the dynamism of any one individual has no individual relation to any other. For Leibniz, as for Descartes, only one individual existent outside God is needed to make the universe meaningful. If there is no extrinsic efficiency in created causality, the Divine Purpose of creation could be realized in any one individual capable of loving the Infinite

Essence in which all possibilities are eminently actual. And so, while Leibniz answered his own famous question: why anything, he did not answer adequately the question: why everything? Of course, no one else has answered that question adequately. But since the cosmological optimism of Leibniz is not an acceptable answer, Christian philosophers must continue to ask the question.

The historic Christian metaphysic requires that existence itself be recognized as good, and St. Augustine's doctrine of the degrees of perfection is still the basic expression of the historic metaphysic. It is also the position of St. Augustine, reiterated by St. Thomas, that the *bonum in commune* is not the *totality* of the *bona in se* of individual beings. This would be true, as St. Thomas points out,¹⁰ only if all created being were incorruptible. Undoubtedly the best possible world, according to natural human standards, would be an incorruptible one. For man, whose own material corruption is an ancient curse which the materialist forever tries to rationalize, is uneasy and querulous about corruption of any kind. The great heart of Leibniz used the resources of his Platonic dialectic to make even the souls of animals immortal. Nevertheless, the corruptible is *bonum in se* for the term of its existence and contributes to the *bonum in commune* by its dissolution. The Scholastic generalization, *generatio unius, corruptio alterius; corruptio alterius, generatio alterius*, was based perhaps on faith as much as knowledge. But the economy of the universe becomes less and less a devout assumption as we learn more and more about the universe.

In a universe recognized as economical, the *limited autonomy* of created being becomes self-evident. Outside God no one, however perfect, can have more than *some degree* of perfection, whether that perfection be by nature or by grace. Autonomous form is not itself divine, as Plato taught. Nor is it self-sufficient, as Aristotle held. For it is interdependent as well as independent. This realistic concept of limited autonomy avoids the practical difficulties of Christian idealism, from Eriugena's spiritualized

¹⁰ *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 48, 2, corp.

intellectualism to Berkeley's spiritualized sensism. Against monadism it maintains an *interrelated* pluralism; against monism a radical pluralism. It rebuts Meliorism by placing fallibilism in the human mind, not in the general dynamism of being. The doctrine of limited autonomy does not "rhetorize" the problem of evil, as the Stoics did. It affirms the actual existence of evil as a privation of being. The doctrine does maintain, however, that there is no fundamental defect or negation in created being. There is rather a positive affirmation of the Immanent and Transcendent Good.

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PATRISTIC SCHOOLS IN THE *SUMMA*

(Continued)



III. LATER THEOLOGIANS

It is most necessary to single out the most important among the later theologians in whom the spirit and influence of the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch are found. They are the authorities who are most respected and followed by St. Thomas in the *Summa Theologica* and through whom the spirit and methods of these schools found their place in the thought of the Common Doctor.

St. Augustine (354-430)

St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, was the greatest of the Fathers of the Church.¹⁸⁷ His very profound and lasting influence on the development of Christian thought is incontestable. His powerful genius was the bridge over which the intellectual treasures of the old world were introduced to the new Latin culture. In him the center of theological influence shifted to the West. Augustine's was a deep and original mind unequalled among Christian thinkers. In the vastness of his writings he was surpassed only by St. John Chrysostom. Besides sowing the seeds of medieval theology, he contributed to the definite settlement of the language of theology. His keenly speculative mind and deeply religious soul earned him a capital position in

¹⁸⁷ The life of St. Augustine is too well known and his works too numerous to be circumscribed by a few words here. He was born at Tagaste, Numidia, in 354 A.D. of a pagan father and the Christian, St. Monica. His studies led him away from his mother's influence and finally into Manicheism. Search for the Truth gradually led him to the Church through Neo-Platonism. He was baptized by St. Ambrose in 387. In 391 he was ordained a priest at Hippo and in 396 became its bishop. He died in 430. His brilliant and fruitful career and permanent influence are without parallel in the Church. His most universally influential works are the *Retractions* and the *Confessions*.

the double movements of Scholasticism and Mysticism. With such a fertile genius it is daring, to say the least, to attempt a summary of his teaching.¹⁶⁸ However, the intent is merely to sketch briefly the method employed by St. Augustine, pointing out those factors which suggest his great authority, particularly with the Angelic Doctor.

St. Augustine was too much of a philosopher and a man of his time to fail to value the gifts of reason. He wished to use the intellectual culture most fitted to pierce the meaning of dogmas. Like most of the Fathers, he considered that Platonist philosophy was just this instrument. He did not distinguish Neo-Platonism from Platonism. Nevertheless, Augustine was not resting in any system but was of the opinion that the spirit of Platonist thought was best suited for the service of Christianity. It was a spiritualist philosophy. It most closely approached that true philosophy, Christianity. It rose above the realms of sense and changeable spirit to reach God.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, he did not hesitate to refute some of the Neo-Platonist teachings, such as its inferior divinities, metempsychosis, its monistic and emanistic tendencies.

The role of reason is to prepare for the act of faith and to aid in the penetration of the faith possessed. This is St. Augustine's famous formula: *Intellige ut credas, crede ut intelligas*.¹⁷⁰ Reason proves the veracity of the witness on whose authority belief is based, and thus "*ipsa (ratio) antecedit*

¹⁶⁸ Most good manuals on the history of dogmas contain worthy treatments of St. Augustine. The most complete summary, that followed here, is that of E. Portalié in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, "Augustin," vol. I, col. 2268-2472.

¹⁶⁹ Of Aristotle, St. Augustine says: "vir excellentis ingenii et eloquio Platoni quidem impar, sed multos facile superans." *De Civitate Dei*, VIII, 12.

Ibid., 5: "Nulli nobis, quam isti, proprius accesserunt."

Ibid., 6: "Cuncta corpora transcenderunt quaerentes Deum . . . omnem animam mutabilesque omnes spiritus transcenderunt quaerentes summum Deum."

¹⁷⁰ *Sermo XLIII*, 7, 9. In *Psalm.*, CXVIII. *Sermo XVIII*, 3: "Alia sunt enim quae nisi intelligamus non credimus, et alia sunt quae nisi credamus non intelligimus: proficit ergo noster intellectus ad intelligenda quae credat, et fides proficit ad credenda quae intelligat."

fidem." Reason is conscious of this authority even in the act of faith.¹⁷¹ Once faith has presented the revealed truths, then reason can endeavor to penetrate them, to see their harmony, to discover their foundation. In St. Augustine the natural and supernatural orders are not found clearly defined. The whole is present in a synthetic divine viewpoint, combining all things in the relationship to God, rather than analyzing them in themselves. Although a philosopher, St. Augustine so joined his philosophy to theology as to make them inseparable. His entire body of teaching is theological, essentially centered on God. This was quite in accord with Augustine's purpose of nourishing piety. Truth was not only the object of contemplation but a good to be possessed, loved, and lived. He considered Christian dogmas more in relation to the soul and the obligations of the Christian life than speculatively. Truth was the central idea of Neo-Platonist philosophy; the study of philosophy was a way of approach to God, not a mere exercise of the mind. Theology was the understanding of faith developed in the superior light of wisdom. Theology is to nourish, defend, and strengthen faith. The operations of charity and wisdom have their part in Augustine's system, as in all the Fathers: they produce a religious knowledge. The essential intellectuality of St. Augustine's teaching is fused with an enlightened mysticism. Consequently, he frequently used symbols to represent the divine mysteries and he was drawn to see things in hierarchy. At the same time he never abandoned the habit of reasoning (on) his faith, manifesting its nobility and reasonableness.

The idea of God, the Truth, the universal principle of being, truth, and goodness, is the foundation of the Augustinian thought—God in his essence (*On the Trinity*), in His Government (*The City of God*), as the last end of all Christian life (*Enchiridion* and *On Christian Combat*). Although God is not directly the object of intuition or immediately seen, yet, His

¹⁷¹ *Epist. CXX*, 38. *De Vera Religione*, 45, 46. *Epist. CXLVII*; *CIII*, 8. *De Praedest. Sanctorum*, 5.

existence being so evident, it is the exception that it be ignored.¹⁷² St. Augustine furnished many proofs of God's existence in his writings: the teleological and metaphysical proofs,¹⁷³ that drawn from the degrees of perfection in the world, which he especially prefers, and the psychological proof.¹⁷⁴ The changing and imperfect character of things in the world, their more or less goodness, cannot be so except in comparison with the supreme good, perfection entirely unlimited. "Wherefore there would be no changeable goods unless there were an incommutable good."¹⁷⁵ Moreover, reason, which is the noblest part of man, is guided by principles and ideas that are necessary, immutable, eternal, and superior to it since it does not create them. The truth which in this way illumines and strengthens the soul is God, since He is the principle of all knowledge, the first and essential foundation, as He is the principle of all being. Yet, these ideas are not absolutely innate.¹⁷⁶ Though it was abandoned by later theologians, Augustine considered this an argument from causality.

God is above all categories of the finite, at once knowable and unknowable.¹⁷⁷ He is the first truth, the first being, the first life, the supreme good.¹⁷⁸ He is unique, simple, eternal. The finite is His work (and therefore good), distinct from Him and created in time. The conservation of beings is a continued creation; divine Providence reaches all beings. All beings are the realizations and images of the ideas of God, all knowledge a participation in His thought, which is the perfect exemplar of all things. Augustine identifies the Platonic subsisting ideas with the creative ideas of God. Not only the general but all

¹⁷² *Sermo LXIX*, 3. *In Joan.*, tract. CVI, 4.

¹⁷³ *Sermo CXLI*, 2. *Enarr. in psalm. XLI*, 8. *Confess.* X, 8-10.

¹⁷⁴ *De Libero Arbit.* II, c. 3-14, 7-38. *In Psalm. XLI*, 8.

¹⁷⁵ *De Trin.* VIII, 5. *Confess.* XI, c. 4, 6.

¹⁷⁶ *De Lib. Arb.* II, 7-14.

¹⁷⁷ *De Trin.* V, 1, 2: ". . . sine qualitate bonum, sine quantitate magnum, sine indigentia creatorem, sine situ praesidentem, sine habitu omnia continentem, sine loco ubique totum, sine tempore sempiternum, sine ulla sui mutatione mutabilia facientem nihilque patientem."

¹⁷⁸ *De Civit. Dei*, VIII, 10, 2. *Ibid.*, c. IV: "Deus est causa subsistendi, et ratione intelligendi, et ordo vivendi."

particular essences, real and possible, ideally pre-exist in the mind of God.¹⁷⁹ From the vision of all these possibles which God sees in His essence, He made a choice by creating the actual world according to His preconceived plan. These divine types are the ultimate bases of all contingent reality, the supreme foundations of the intelligibility of essences, the source of the certitude of our knowledge. This exemplarism, according to which St. Augustine had interpreted the Platonist theory of ideas, was well known in the Middle Ages and exerted its influence on St. Thomas.

The Greek Fathers had been forced by errors and heresies to treat the Trinity in a controversial manner. St. Augustine wrote more directly as a speculative theologian and a contemplative. His work, *On the Trinity*, is his most lengthy and profound. The point of departure is the one, simple divine nature and not, as with the other Fathers, the Father as the source of the other two Persons.¹⁸⁰ Consequently he teaches the unity of operation of the Three Persons *ad extra*, their absolute equality and circumincession, the necessity of singular affirmations in regard to their nature and anything said absolutely of God.¹⁸¹ In order to explain the plurality of Persons and to avoid the errors of Modalism, St. Augustine developed the theory of relations.

It is shown that not everything which is said of God is predicated according to substance but it is predicated also relatively, that is, not to Himself, but to something other than Himself.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ *De div. quaest.*, LXXXIII, q. 46, 2: "Singula igitur propriis sunt creata rationibus . . . rerum omnium creandarum creaturarumve rationes in divina mente continentur."

¹⁸⁰ *De Trin.* VIII, 11. *Ep.* CXX, 13, 17.

¹⁸¹ *De Trin.* II, 8, 9, 12; III, 22-27; VI, 8, 9; XV, 8; V, 9, 11.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, XV, c. 14, 5; V: "These Persons are relations, which are not to be confused with the substance or nature, since they are not something absolute; but neither can they be called accidents, because they are essential to the nature and like it eternal and necessary. . . ."

Ibid., V, 6, 16, 17; VII, 24; *De Civit. Dei* XI, 10, 1: "Non secundum substantiam haec dicuntur quia non quisque eorum ad seipsum, sed ad invicem atque ad alterutrum ista dicuntur; neque secundum accedens, quia et quod dicitur Pater et quod dicitur Filius aeternum atque incommutabile est. . . . Hoc non secundum

He very explicitly taught the procession of the Holy Spirit from both Father and Son.¹⁸³ In order to understand more fully the mystery of the Trinity and to show its reasonableness, although an analogical and imperfect knowledge, he sought to find many analogies or images of the Trinity. Man is an image by *esse, nosse and velle*.¹⁸⁴

The Bishop of Hippo left no special treatise on the Incarnation except for *Epistle CXXXVII ad Volusianum*. However, Christ holds the prominent position in his theology. He is the Way to God. Augustine taught the divinity of Christ and His complete human nature, and he so understood the union of these natures in Christ that the Eastern heresies were not able to secure a foothold in the West. The mission of Christ on earth was for the purpose of redeeming man and freeing him from sin. Augustine is more complete than any other Father on the place of the Blessed Mother in the economy of salvation.¹⁸⁵

It is not necessary to discuss the Augustinian teaching on grace and free will. Opposing the errors of the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, the dangers of which Augustine saw far more clearly than the theologians of the East, the Doctor of Grace was the first to synthesize, and state with a greater clarity than heretofore, the relationships of original and actual sin, grace and free will, and to provide an explanation of them. He insisted on the absolute mastery of God by His grace of all the deter-

substantiam dicuntur, sed secundum relativum; quod tamen relativum non est accidens, quia non est mutabile."

Ibid., V, 10; VII, 8, 9: "Tres utique sunt. . . Tamen cum quaeritur quid tres, magna prorsus inopia humanum laborat eloquium. Dictum est tamen tres personae, non ut illud diceretur, sed ne taceretur."

¹⁸³ *De Trin.* IV, 20. *Cont. Maximinum* II, 14, 1. *In Joan.* tract. XCIX, 7: "Non possumus dicere quod Spiritus Sanctus et a Filio non procedat; neque enim frustra idem Spiritus et Patris et Filii Spiritus dicitur."

De Trin. V, 15: "Fatendum est Patrem et Filium principium esse Spiritus Sancti, non dua principia."

¹⁸⁴ *Confess.* XIII, c. XI, 12. Cf. *de Trin.* VIII-XIV.

¹⁸⁵ *Sermo CLXXIV*, 2: "Si homo non periisset, Filius hominis non venisset." Protin, S., "La Mariologie de St. Augustin," *Revue Augustinienne*, 1902. Alvery, A., "Mariologie Augustinienne," *ibid.*, 1907.

minations of the will, the latter yet remaining free under this action, the reconciliation of these two truths being referred to the manner of divine government. He distinguished two orders of grace, the motions given for the natural virtues and those given for salutary supernatural acts, such as the first motions of faith. Although the will is free, since the Fall it is inclined to evil. St. Thomas followed in great part the teaching and authority of Augustine as to the reality, necessity, distinctions, and gratuity of grace and the freedom of the will under grace. Augustine did not develop the question of the efficacy of grace precisely enough to preclude the divergences of systems among later theologians. But there are sufficient indications which substantiate the interpretation of St. Thomas and his disciples.¹⁸⁶ The Doctor of Hippo maintained the fact of a predestination to glory and of a final reprobation against the Origenists, the gratuity of grace and salvation, and the special divine mercy toward the elect. Based on his lofty and pure concept of God, the Truth, Wisdom, and Goodness, in the mystery of predestination and human liberty, Augustine concluded that such a Being can in no wise cause evil and although for good reasons permitting it, He foresees it, can punish it, and in His wisdom draws good from it by manifesting His justice, as His mercy is shown in rewarding the elect.

In his doctrinal method St. Augustine laid stress upon authority. Besides Tradition and the ecclesiastical magisterium, he placed the authority of the Scriptures at the foundation. He admitted their divine inspiration and absolute inerrancy. His mystic temperament and Neo-Platonist spirit naturally inclined him to a spiritual exegesis after the manner of the Alexandrians. Yet, in spite of the wide range he gave to this mode of interpretation, he never neglected the literal sense. He ruled that the true Scriptural sense should always be sought and unscientific interpretations avoided. He was the first to admit a multiple literal sense.¹⁸⁷ Whatever truth can be found in a phrase of

¹⁸⁶ *Enchiridion*, c. 95 sq. *Ad Simplic.* I, q. II, n. 13. *De corrept. et grat.* n. 31.

¹⁸⁷ *De Doct. Christiana*, II-III. *De Gen. ad litt.*, I, c. 19-21.

Scripture was the meaning intended by the Holy Spirit, the primary author.¹⁸⁸ But he was not too certain of this theory. The golden rule which tempered all his exegesis was the criterion, the authority of the Church.¹⁸⁹

St. Augustine was before all else a mystic. Truth meant for him not mere contemplation but a good to be possessed, embraced with the whole soul. God is a living reality to be enjoyed through charity. The holy Doctor discovered Him in all His creatures. In contemplating them he ascended by so many degrees to their Maker. In this can be seen the Platonist influence. They are reflections of Him, participations of the essential Being, unchangeable Truth, incorruptible Good. Even the Trinity has been traced in them. St. Augustine wrote his works with a view to leading men to a deeper and truer knowledge and love of God, to union with Him.

St. Augustine possessed one of the greatest minds which the Church has produced. He is the great founder of supernatural Christian anthropology, the one most responsible for the Western idea of an immanent Trinity, the *Filioque*, and the attempts at psychological explanations of the mystery. He built up a concise theology of grace. The substance of his theology has passed into the dogmatic definitions of the Church. St. Augustine wielded one of the greatest influences in the Middle Ages. This attraction was due to the theological tendency which inspired his doctrines and method. Although by the 13th century his influence was combined with that of the Pseudo-Dionysius, the Damascene, and Aristotle, he maintained a dominant authority.

¹⁸⁸ *De Potentia*, q. IV, a. 1. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 10. *De Doctr. Chr.*, III, c. XXVII, 38; I, 40. *Confess.* XII, c. XXXI, 42, 30-33.

¹⁸⁹ *De Doctr. Chr.*, III, 2, 2: "Consulat (interpres) regulam fidei quam de Scripturarum planioribus locis et ecclesiae auctoritate percepit."

De Gen. ad litt. imperf., I, 1: "Quaerendi dubitatio catholicae fidei metas non debet excedere."

De Doctr. Chr., III, 10, 15: "Non autem praecipit Scriptura nisi caritatem . . non autem asserit nisi catholicam fidem."

De Gen. ad litt. imperf., I, 1: "Multi haeretici ad suam sententiam quae praeter fidem est catholicae disciplinae, expositionem Scripturarum divinarum trahere consueverunt."

This legacy comprised his teaching on the nature of God, the divine exemplary ideas, creation, the spirituality of the soul, all tending to correct the naturalism of Aristotle, which the Scholastics coordinated with Augustinian Platonism. In addition there was his affective and synthetic doctrinal method, a clear-cut moral associated with profound mysticism. The greatest disciple of Augustine was St. Thomas, who held him in great authority. He constantly invoked him and always attempted to explain favorably the meaning of Augustine. He recognized and interpreted the richness of the Augustinian theology, brought its essential points to perfection and was guided by the spirit of its teaching.

Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 480-c. 530)

An outstanding contributor to the progress of theology who appeared in the latter part of the fifth century was the writer who was known for centuries as Dionysius the Areopagite, the disciple of St. Paul.¹⁹⁰ His writings had a great influence on Eastern thought and were made one of the bases of Scholastic and Mystical theology in the Middle Ages. He attempted to conciliate and amalgamate as far as possible Christian dogmas and Neo-Platonic ideas, and to develop mystical theology in close harmony with dogmatic theology. Through his authority Neo-Platonism "obtained a place by the side of Aristotle's speculations in treatises of Scholastic theology."¹⁹¹ He was very familiar with the Neo-Platonist writings, especially those of Proclus, and knew the Fathers at least up to St. Cyril of Alexandria. He did not intend to baptize Neo-Platonism but to refute its arguments against the Christian doctrine and to point

¹⁹⁰ The true author of the Pseudo-Areopagitica is not known to this day. They were certainly written between 482 and 532 A.D. They include ten letters and four treatises: *The Celestial Hierarchy*; *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*; *The Divine Names*; *Mystical Theology*. The intention was to compose a complete course of mystical theology and lead men to union with God. The style is obscure with purpose. The author constantly uses the works of the Neo-Platonists, especially Proclus. Both their real intrinsic value and their spurious authority gave them a preponderating influence in the Middle Ages.

¹⁹¹ Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, III, p. 5.

out the superiority of Christian teaching on those points on which they were on common ground. Although using Neo-Platonist expressions, he employed only those ideas which could be accommodated to the service of the faith. The obscurity which sometimes surrounds his thought is due to the nature of the matter under discussion, the Neo-Platonist influence, his own bent, and even to deliberate purpose.¹⁹²

Philosophy always remained for Dionysius an instrument. Although he was educated under Neo-Platonist influence and avowedly set about to enlist it in the service of the faith, he steadfastly kept it in its subservient role. He was kept from deflecting from the truth by a lively sense of faith. Dionysius used the general method of Neo-Platonism but did not hesitate at times to correct it and give new meanings to its terms. This type of Neo-Platonism

holds undisputed sway in the works of the Pseudo-Areopagite, and through them finds its way into the commentaries of St. Maximus, thenceforth to remain the philosophy of mystical and contemplative theology, which, in the words of Pseudo-Dionysius, does not prove the truth, but exhibits it symbolically and enables those who yearn for light and holiness (Ep. IX, 1) to attain to it without going through a process of reasoning.¹⁹³

Systematic theology or the rational investigation of the revealed truths is a preparation for or the fruit of mystical theology, in which view philosophy plays only an instrumental role.

The Holy Scripture remains the source and foundation of all theological doctrine. Dionysius made use of the advantages of allegorism, even to that point which the Aristotelian literalists might term excessive.

The Dionysian theology is centered quite extensively about God. Intimate union with God, the deification of man, is its concern. Dionysius taught a very lofty, pure, and simple concept of God; he maintained His absolute transcendence. He is above every genus and category; the divine attributes are formally

¹⁹² *De Divinis Nominibus, Commem. Sti. Thomae, prologus.*

¹⁹³ Tixeront, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

above those discovered in creation; every name ascribed to Him properly belongs to creatures rather than to Him. He is nameless (*ἄνόνημος*).¹⁹⁴ The express purpose of the Areopagite was to lead to a pure knowledge of God.¹⁹⁵ Although God is absolute unity, yet as the principle of all things He is in a certain way those multiple attributes observed in creatures and consequently He is "many-named" (*πολυώνυμος*).¹⁹⁶ But since these names are imposed from concepts deriving from creatures, God far excels their literal signification.

Hence there are, in the genesis of our idea of God, three intellectual acts that can be distinguished by analysis. A first act by which we ascribe to God all the qualities of the beings whose principle He is: this is the affirmative theology. A second act, by which we deny Him these same qualities, because He transcends them: this is the negative theology.¹⁹⁷ Lastly, a third act, by which we notice that our negation does not destroy our first affirmation, for it merely declares that God is above all that we can affirm or deny of him.¹⁹⁸ This process is what the Scholastics later on called the *via eminentiae*. Dionysius exemplified it by multiplied words composed with *αὐτό*, *ἀρχή*, *ὑπερ* on the one hand, and a privative *ἀ*, on the other, and applying them to God. The former mark God as the being, the essential perfection, and the principle of every being and perfection; the latter denote that—formally—He is no definite perfection, but above every perfection and being.¹⁹⁹

This process at most disposes for that other form of knowledge of God which is mystical experience. It should be kept in mind that theology, in the earlier centuries, was taken strictly as the knowledge of God, the Trinity, the divine nature and attributes. It concentrated on a fuller understanding of these matters, the primary principles that Faith proposes. Consequently, this knowledge or theology is discursive or mystical.

¹⁹⁴ "De div. nom.," I, 1, 5, 6, *P. G.*, III, col. 588, 593, 596. "De mystica theologia," V, *P. G.*, III, col. 1045.

¹⁹⁵ "De div. nom.," XIII.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 6; II, 3, 11, *ibid.*, col. 596, 640, 649.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, IX. "De myst. theol.," I, 2; III; IV. "Eccl. Hier.," II, 3. "Ep. I"; IX, 1.

¹⁹⁸ "De myst. theol.," I, 2, *P. G.*, III, col. 1000. "Ep. I," *ibid.*, col. 1065.

¹⁹⁹ Tixeront, *loc. cit.*, p. 186.

Being concerned with a more and more pure knowledge of God, the *unum Absolutum*, free from the imperfections of creatures, Dionysius wrote little about the Trinity, the distinction of the Persons. He held that unity and trinity do not express the transcendent being of God;²⁰⁰ and as a result of the oneness of their substance he taught their circumincession.²⁰¹ Nor does he discourse at length on Christ beyond repeating the orthodox doctrine. Because Christ is God in a human nature, he spoke of a theandric operation.²⁰²

The Areopagite saw creation as the result of divine love and goodness which gave to creatures their multitudinous gradations. In this he maintained continuity with Augustine and Plato. God exercises a minute providence over creatures and directs each according to its nature, drawing all mutually in an ascending order to Himself. He represented creation as a circle from God back to God, in addition to many other similes.²⁰³ Dionysius avoided all pantheism by emphasizing that the creative act was a free divine act; creatures were free emanations from God.²⁰⁴ In this view Dionysius had no difficulty in establishing the position and nature of the angelic world in the order of the universe as intermediaries. He was the first to declare clearly and unequivocally their pure spirituality and intellectuality,²⁰⁵ and to teach their distribution into hierarchies and choirs.²⁰⁶ It was the doctrine that was accepted and developed by all later Catholic theologians.

Dionysius the Areopagite was a mystic according to the best traditions of the Alexandrian school. His writings were produced with a view to contemplation, to an intimate union with God. His insistence on the divine transcendence and unity, his

²⁰⁰ "De div. nom.," XIII, 3, *ibid.*, col. 981.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, II, 4, *ibid.*, col. 641.

²⁰² *Ep. IV ad Caium*.

²⁰³ Cf. "De Div. nom.," IX, 9, *P. G.*, III, col. 909c. *Ibid.*, II, 10 (col. 648c); XIII, 1 (col. 977b); IV, 1, 6 (col. 693b, 701a); XI, 2 (col. 952a); I, 2 (col. 588c); X, 1 (col. 936); IV, 14 (col. 712); V, 6 (col. 820).

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 10, *ibid.*, 708b.

²⁰⁵ "Celest. Hier.," IV, 1, *ibid.*, col. 177c.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, 1, 2; IX, 1.

efforts to clarify the divine attributes, to intimate a purer and simpler knowledge of God, are pointed to this end. The idea of the ecclesiastical hierarchy being analogous to the celestial, of the threefold manner of participating the divine perfections in creatures (purification, illumination, perfection), is subordinated to the same end. The knowledge of God in its higher stages is infused, not the result of human efforts alone but of divine impression, a connaturality with or certain sympathy for the divine.²⁰⁷ In this respect, Dionysius was among the pioneer mystical theorists and his influence in the study of mystical theology was tremendous.

In the Middle Ages the authority of this supposed disciple of St. Paul was esteemed above the Fathers and second only to the canonical authors. His influence was very real and lasting in speculative and mystical theology in both East and West. The writings of the Areopagite were known in the West, especially in the Latin translation of Scotus Erigena. St. Thomas made most frequent use of Dionysius in all his works, even writing a special commentary—*De Divinis Nominibus*. Dionysius was one of the principal sources of Alexandrian influence in the theology of the Angelic Doctor.

St. John Damascene (c. 675-749)

St. John Damascene is the last of the great Greek Fathers. He was the intellectual leader of his time, and his influence upon the Oriental Churches has made him the classic author even into modern times. His effect upon Latin theologians was very great, beginning to be felt in the West at the time of Peter Lombard. He has been called the St. Thomas of the Greeks, but he had neither the breadth nor the acuteness of intellect of the Angelic Doctor. He produced the greatest and most complete Summa among the Eastern theologians, a synthetic expose of dogma. He summed up and assimilated the teaching of his predecessors, skillfully and methodically organized it, and presented it in clear, precise, and firm expression. Although he

²⁰⁷ "De Div. Nom.," VII, 3. Cf. *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

did not incite others to attempt the study and solution of new problems, he did faithfully reflect the traditions of Greek theology.²⁰⁸

St. John of Damascus was primarily a theologian. But he valued philosophy highly and considered it important in the exposition of Catholic dogma. The first part of his great *Source of Knowledge* is devoted to it. He considered philosophy only in its relationship to theology. Human sciences are merely servants of theology.²⁰⁹ He borrowed several definitions from Aristotle which he did not hesitate to correct in accordance with Christian doctrine. Through Pseudo-Dionysius and his immediate predecessors, the Damascene absorbed a great deal of Neo-Platonism. But neither it nor Aristotle was the master of his thought. That place was filled by the Scriptures and the Fathers. It is the Fathers rather than the philosophers who are to be heeded.²¹⁰ He condemned the heretics for making Aristotle the thirteenth Apostle and for preferring the pagan to the inspired writers.²¹¹

St. John did not supply an exact definition and analysis of faith. He defined it briefly as an assent without indiscreet and curious research.²¹² It is indispensable for salvation. Its norm is the tradition of the Church. He who departs from the norm

²⁰⁸ St. John of Damascus was born towards the end of the 7th century of a Christian family in high position in the local Arab government. He early spoke out in support of images. In 735 he was ordained a monk-priest. His life was given to prayer, study and the composition of his many works. He died about 749 A. D. Besides being the chief upholder of image worship against Leo the Isaurian, he was the last of the great representatives of Greek theology during the early part of the Middle Ages. He gave the Summa and the definitive formula of that theology to which scarcely any addition has been made in the following ages. His most important work is the *Source of Knowledge*, divided into three parts, of which the last, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, contains his whole theology. The finest survey of the Damascene theology is given by M. Jugie in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, "St. Jean Damascène," which is used extensively here.

²⁰⁹ "Dialectica," *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 532b.

²¹⁰ "Fons Scientiae, prologus," *ibid.*, col. 525.

²¹¹ "Contra Jacobitas," 10, *ibid.*, col. 1441a.

²¹² Cf. "De Fid. Orth.," II, 10-11, *ibid.*, col. 1126-1127.

is an infidel.²¹³ The sources of this faith are the Scriptures and unwritten tradition.²¹⁴ The Scriptures are inspired by God. Although individual Fathers and Doctors may make mistakes, taken as a whole and in agreement, he seems to attribute inspiration to them.²¹⁵ Revelation is accommodated to the man's spiritual growth²¹⁶ and in the elaboration of doctrinal formulas there is a real dogmatic progress. Words not found in the Scriptures were used by the Fathers to convey equivalent expressions and all must accept them.²¹⁷

The Holy Doctor distinguished two forms of theology: *θεολογία ἡνωμένη*—*theologia unita, de Deo uno*, and *θεολογία διακεκριμένη*—*theologia discreta, de Deo trino*. God is known perfectly to Himself alone. Being essentially good and thus communicative, He revealed Himself to men through the creation and conservation of the universe and by positive revelation. This latter comprises only what it is useful and feasible for man to know.²¹⁸ God's nature being infinite and incomprehensible, our knowledge of it is more negative than positive. We know only His existence, infinity, and incomprehensibility, which knowledge is, so to speak, innate in every man.²¹⁹ He does not neglect the ways of affirmation and eminence.²²⁰ *I am who am*, is the best name for God, who is above all being, the plenitude of being. He explained the use of anthropomorphisms in the Scriptures.²²¹

By the metaphysical arguments of the changeableness of the created universe, the conservation and government of the world, the order and harmony of the cosmos, the Damascene demonstrated the existence of God.²²² The divine unity he proved by

²¹³ *Ibid.*, loc. cit., col. 1128a.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 12, col. 1136b, 1173. "De Imag." I, 23, *ibid.*, col. 1256.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, II, col. 1305a.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 8, col. 1289.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 11, col. 1333.

²¹⁸ "De Fid. Orth.," I, 1, *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 789-792.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 4, col. 800; I, 1, col. 789; I, 3, col. 793c.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 8, col. 808-809; 12, col. 845-848.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, I, 11, col. 841-844.

²²² *Ibid.*, I, 3, col. 793-798.

His perfection, immensity, and governance of the world, and the ontological fact that unity is prior to plurality.²²³ He listed the divine attributes, demonstrating in particular His incorporeity, simplicity, and immensity. He explained the sense in which God alone is incorporeal and uncircumscribed.²²⁴ The knowledge of God joined to the divine will is the creator and cause of universal being.²²⁵ God is omnipotent, able to do all He wishes, not wishing to do all He can.²²⁶

In the mystery of the Trinity the Doctor of Damascus added nothing to the teachings of his predecessors, the Cappadocians, especially St. Gregory Nazianzen. He was in ignorance of Augustine's teaching and his theory of the processions. The Trinity is an incomprehensible mystery; the more it is studied, the less it is known.²²⁷ All comparisons are inadequate.²²⁸ Person in God is a mode, without beginning, of each eternal subsistence, distinguished from one another by relations of origin, yet mutually compenetrating, without confusion, because founded on the unity of essence (*circumincessio*).²²⁹ The Son cooperates with the Father in the procession of the Spirit from the latter, but He receives this spirating power from the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds though not from the Son, because the Son is not the principle of the Trinity, the Father alone possessing that property.²³⁰

The central point in St. John's teaching is the Incarnation. He has been called the Doctor of the Incarnation. His synthesis is representative of all previous Greek teaching. The only

²²³ *Ibid.*, I, 5, "Dialog. contra Manichaeos."

²²⁴ "De Fid. Orth.," *P. G.*, XCIV, c. IV, col. 797; IX, col. 833; XII, col. 849-853; 845b.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 9, col. 837b. "De Imag.," I, 10, col. 1240-1241.

²²⁶ "De Fid. Orth.," 14, *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 860-861.

²²⁷ "De Haeres. epilog.," *ibid.*, col. 780a.

²²⁸ "De Fid. Orth.," III, 26, col. 1096b.

²²⁹ "Dialect.," 66, col. 669a; "De Fid. Orth.," 9, col. 837a; 8, col. 828-829; 14, col. 860b.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 12, col. 849. "Homil. in Sabbato Sancto," *P. G.*, XCVI, col. 605. "De Hymno Trisagio," 28, *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 60.

motive for the Incarnation was the salvation of man.²³¹ It has also procured the glory of God, manifesting His goodness, wisdom, justice and power.²³² Being the Son of God, it was fitting that only the Word become the Son of the Virgin Mary.²³³ The Word supplied the role of hypostasis in the human nature of Christ, which from the first instant of its being never possessed a proper personality but participated in the existence of the Word, subsisted in it. St. John seemed to place personality in existence.²³⁴ The two natures in Christ are united in the Word without confusion or the lessening of their proper qualities. He remarked that most Trinitarian and Christological heresies arose from the confusion of the concepts of nature and person. He himself repeated the definitions and philosophical theories of Leontius of Byzantium. He tried to bring into agreement the definitions of the Fathers and the philosophers. He gave primacy to the concept of the person.

From the fact of this hypostatic union, the Damascene drew several corollaries which anticipated the conclusions of the later Scholastics. Christ is truly God and Mary truly θεοτόκος, and universal mediatrix. Since generation is referred to the person and not the nature, it is the hypostasis that is engendered.²³⁵ Human nature has become deified, not losing its own proper essence and properties, but being the instrument of divine operations. The two natures integrally subsisting with all their properties in the divine hypostasis, the actions are thus theandric.²³⁶ The humanity of Christ inasmuch as it is united to the Word is the object of adoration.²³⁷ St. John spoke at length on the communication of idioms and the value of using abstract

²³¹ "De Fid. Orth.," III, 12, *ibid.*, col. 1028-1029. *Ibid.*, IV, 4, col. 1108. "De Duabus Voluntatibus," P. G., XCV, col. 181a.

²³² "De Fid. Orth.," III, 1, P. G., XCIV, col. 984.

²³³ *Ibid.*, IV, 4, *ibid.*, col. 1108a. "De SS. Trinit.," 1, P. G., XCV, col. 12a.

²³⁴ "De Fid. Orth.," 12, P. G., XCIV, col. 1032c.

²³⁵ "Hom. II, in Dormit.," 18, P. G., XCIV, col. 733, c, d. "In Nativ.," 11, 12, *ibid.*, 680. "De Fid. Orth.," 12, P. G., XCIV, col. 1118c, d.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 17, *ibid.*, col. 1068-1072; 19, col. 1077-1081; 15, col. 1057-1060.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 8, col. 1018.

and concrete terms²³⁸—the finest treatment of the subject until his time. He also treated of the manner in which Scripture speaks of Christ and Christ speaks of Himself.²³⁹ It also followed that Christ was perfect from conception in human and divine wisdom. He had the beatific vision.²⁴⁰ The natural passions assumed by Christ were entirely under the control of His reason; their motions were not caused by the apprehension of the unknown. His body was preserved from total corruption after death.²⁴¹

Man is the image of God principally in his intellect and will. He has natural tendencies to moral good imprinted on his nature by God. To practice virtue and to advance in it the help of God is necessary. Man, raised to the supernatural state, fell. By Adam's transgression sin inhered in human nature, being subjected primarily in the free will.²⁴² By sin man lost divine grace and the privileges of incorruptibility, impassibility, and immortality.²⁴³ As a result there is attached to human nature the *aversio a Deo* and the *conversio ad creaturas*. Although retaining free will, man cannot lift himself up.²⁴⁴

This brings up the question of grace and predestination. In general terms the Doctor of Damascus taught the absolute necessity of grace, without which salvation and the power to attain it cannot be had, since these are beyond human endeavors.²⁴⁵ Lacking grace man can neither do nor have any good, know supernatural truth nor overcome carnal concupiscence.²⁴⁶ Concomitant grace, the result of free choice, coop-

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4, col. 997-1000.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, 18, col. 1181-1192.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 7, col. 1012; 17, col. 1068-1072.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 20, col. 1084; 23, col. 1088-1089; 28, col. 1097-1100. "De duabus volunt.," 36, 37, *P. G.*, XCV, col. 173-177.

²⁴² "De Fid. Orth.," IV, 13, *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 1137b, c. *Ibid.*, III, 14, col. 1041d.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, II, 28, col. 961; III, 1, col. 981. "In Sabb. Sanct., 7-12, *P. G.*, XVI, col. 609-612; 27, col. 628.

²⁴⁴ "De Fid. Orth.," II, 30, *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 977c, d. "In Ficum Arefactum," 1, *P. G.*, XCVI, col. 576-577.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3, *ibid.*, col. 581c.

²⁴⁶ "De Imag.," III, 3, *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 134. "Dialect.," 1, *ibid.*, col. 532a. "De Fid. Orth.," IV, 17, col. 1176c; 22, col. 1200-1201.

eration, and the divine concursus is necessary for salutary actions. Even Adam in his sinless state needed this grace to progress in good.²⁴⁷ Prevenient grace is necessary but it depends on our will to choose or reject it. This is the tenor of Greek teaching, which seemed to ignore the existence of efficacious grace, which is not the result of human consent. St. John gave definitions of actual grace which avoided the extreme of Pelagianism.²⁴⁸ By baptism and habitual grace men become sons of God by adoption, gods by participation in His nature, above the angels, the temples of the Trinity dwelling in the soul, and possessing the right to heaven.²⁴⁹

St. John taught predestination *post praevisa merita*. Although he immortalized the distinction between the antecedent and consequent wills in God, he ignored completely all predestination antecedent to foreseen merits. He was not a Pelagian since he admitted the radical impotence of human nature to attain salvation,²⁵⁰ grace being necessary for every salutary act. He was not fully able to conciliate the divine infallible foreknowledge and universal causality with created liberty. God is the cause of all good in creatures, but free creatures in their free acts initiate the quality of goodness or evil in them.²⁵¹ The Damascene realized his inability to fully explain the workings of divine grace.²⁵² It must be pointed out that, although he is assuming the human point of view here, he was concerned with the heresy of his time, which was Manicheism. Thus he sought to defend human liberty. Behind him, fitting him for this task, was a strong theological tradition.

St. John Damascene was affected by both currents of Greek tradition. He was primarily a theologian. In his treatment on

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 2, col. 924a. "C. Manich.," 70, col. 1569a, b.

²⁴⁸ "De Fid. Orth.," II, 30, col. 972-973. "De Duab. Volun.," 19, *P. G.*, XCV, col. 149b.

²⁴⁹ "De Fid. Orth.," IV, 89, *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 1117a; 15, col. 1121c. "De Imag.," III, 26, col. 1248; 30, col. 1349c; 32, col. 1352a; 33, col. 1252.

²⁵⁰ "In Ficum Aref.," 1, *P. G.*, XCVI, col. 576-577.

²⁵¹ "De Fid. Orth.," II, 30; IV, *P. G.*, XCIV, col. 969, 1192b.

²⁵² "C. Manich.," 77, *ibid.*, col. 1576c.

God, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and faith he was deeply influenced by his predecessors, Leontius of Byzantium and St. Maximus, as well as St. Gregory Nazianzen and the Pseudo-Dionysius. He held the Nazianzen Doctor in especial authority. Through these writers the influence of Alexandria and the mystical tendency of the Neo-Platonists were felt. On the other hand, and to a lesser degree, the Antiochene tradition appeared in his treatment of man, grace, and what is known of his few Scriptural commentaries. In these latter, he was content to repeat principally the homilies of St. John Chrysostom. Peter Lombard divided his *Liber Sententiarum* along the lines of the *De Fide Orthodoxa*, which was the only work known to the Middle Ages. The influence of this work on St. Thomas and the Scholastics was very real, though his ideas on the procession of the Holy Spirit were little understood.²⁵³ St. Thomas fused the Damascene distinction of antecedent and consequent wills with the Augustinian concept of predestination.²⁵⁴

IV. THE *Summa Theologica*

In the philosophical and natural sciences the weakest argument is the one from authority. Since these sciences fall within the adequate object of the human intellect, the mind is, therefore, able to know their objects as they are, in themselves. It can argue metaphysically, conclude from what is better known, both in itself and to the mind, to what is less known. So in these sciences an argument from authority, based as it is upon the testimony of another, and not upon evidence, is merely probable, hardly a compliment to the dignity of the human intellect. In theology the situation is reversed. The human mind is humbled in the presence of those things which surpass its entire power to conceive or to attain. For the principles of theology, though most evident and certain in themselves, offer the least evidence and certitude to the human mind. They are held by faith, on

²⁵³ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 36, a. 2, ad 3.

²⁵⁴ D'Alès, A., "Prédestination," *Dict. Apol. de la Foi Cath.*, t. IV, col. 227.

the authority of God revealing, the testimony He has given of His own Self and the truths of the supernatural life. It is upon the sure basis of authority that reason begins its work. The proper source of theology is authority.

St. Thomas was well aware of the primacy of authority and fitted together his entire synthesis upon this truth.

This doctrine is especially based upon arguments from authority, inasmuch as its principles are obtained by revelation: . . . Nor does this take away from the dignity of this doctrine, for although the argument from authority based on human reason is the weakest, yet the argument from authority based on divine revelation is the strongest . . . sacred doctrine . . . properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof and the authority of the doctors of the Church as one that may properly be used, yet merely as probable.²⁶⁵

The teaching of the Fathers and their successors, the authority or source proper to the science of theology, is the concern here. It is well known that St. Thomas had the greatest respect for these men. At times he seemed to bend over backwards to save their authority. He was too humble to set himself in judgment of men of holy genius, whom undoubtedly Providence had fitted to play a special part in the development of the theological science.

. . . the holy Doctors have sometimes expressed themselves with greater emphasis than the strict propriety of terms allows. Whence instead of enlarging upon such expressions we should rather explain them. . . . These phrases are not to be taken too literally, but are to be loyally explained, wherever they are used by holy doctors.²⁶⁶

In all events the teachings of the Fathers are to be exposed reverently.²⁶⁷ Such was indeed the practice of the Angelic Doctor.

The *Summa Theologica* was St. Thomas' *chef d'oeuvre*, the perfection of his thought. For the sake of clarity, brevity, and intelligibility, he chose his authorities most carefully; he intro-

²⁶⁵ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 39, a. 5, ad 1; III, q. 4, a. 3, ad 1.

²⁶⁷ Cf. *Contra Errores Graecorum*, proemium.

duced a minimum into his work. Of these, three are most frequently quoted throughout the *Summa*. They are the Masters of Aquinas. It was to their authority that he looked for guidance. It was their teaching which exerted the greatest influence upon his mind. They are St. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius and St. John Damascene, disciples of the early Alexandrian tradition, Neo-Platonist in education, Platonist in spirit. At the same time it is most evident that to these names must be added that of Aristotle.

St. Thomas is considered the great Christian Aristotelian. Through his efforts an intellectual revolution took place. Aristotle, long contested, was securely and permanently established in ecclesiastical theology, on an equal footing with the agelong Platonist supremacy, stemming from the earlier Greek Fathers and St. Augustine. In the Philosopher St. Thomas recognized the value of a vigorous method of scientific analysis, which he employed extensively throughout his own works. The logical works of Aristotle were known throughout the West a century before Aquinas. They had satisfied the growing desire among thinkers for a sure method of discussion. The severe Aristotelian dialectic had all the advantages. It was the philosophy of demonstration.

The Platonist philosophy, which had rendered signal services in the domain of Christian speculation, showed itself powerless when it was a question of organizing methodically in a complete system of theology the truths acquired and of giving a clear and precise scientific formula.²⁵⁸

Once having taken to itself the systematic form, Christian theology gradually became aware of the more essential parts of Aristotelianism. St. Thomas definitively stamped its character on Christian theology. Aristotelian philosophy took a scientific

²⁵⁸ Braun, *Revue des sciences ecclésiastiques*, June, 1907: "La philosophie platonicienne qui avait rendu de signalés services dans le domaine de la spéculation chrétienne, se montrait impuissante quand il s'agissait d'organiser méthodiquement en un système complet de théologie les vérités acquises et de donner une formule scientifique nette et précise."

Saisset, Emile, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1^{er} Mai, 1853.

attitude toward reality. It was concerned with natures as they are in themselves, viewing each being in its proper grade and mode of being.

The Angelic Doctor, however, was not an Aristotelian in the sense of being anti-Platonist. Living in a period when the two traditions were considered antagonistic, he used both to great advantage. If Albert the Great thought that one could not become a perfect philosopher unless he studied the two philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, so, too, in order to penetrate more perfectly the teaching of St. Thomas it is necessary to know what he owed to Plato and what to the Stagirite. St. Thomas did not know Plato directly. It seems that the only textual contact he had with him was in the *Timaeus* and a few passages from the *Phaedo*. How he would have reacted had he known Plato first-hand as he did Aristotle it is vain to imagine. His knowledge of the great Academician was through the opinions of Aristotle and the teachings and spirit of the Fathers. The influence of Plato was exercised principally through the intermediary of the Fathers, especially the tradition of Augustine, "the Christian Plato."²⁵⁰ In the system of Aquinas the Platonist and Aristotelian traditions found their proper and complementary place.

Aristotle's was a philosophy of nature expressed in a literal manner undoubtedly for the very purpose of preserving in its earthly moorings the higher doctrine of his master, Plato, against

²⁵⁰ Huit, C., "Les Eléments Platoniciennes de la Doctrine de St. Thomas," *Revue Th.*, 1911, p. 741: "L'exemple à coup sur le plus décisif en ce sens avait été donné par St. Augustin. Faire de la notion de Dieu le centre philosophique par excellence, définir l'être pur par le bien absolu, chercher dans l'unité le caractère fondamental du beau, monter par degrés de la terre au ciel, des vulgarités de la nature animale jusqu'aux sublimités de la nature infiniment parfaite, dériver des raisons éternelles, des idées divines, toute réalité, toute vérité, toute certitude, n'est-ce pas faire acte du plus pur platonisme? Là même où la pensée de saint Augustin garde un caractère personnel et original, a l'élan de l'âme, a la poésie de l'expression on reconnaît sans peine l'esprit platonicien. Dès lors, si l'on tient compte de l'immense et légitime influence que son génie, sa renommée, ses nombreux écrits, lui ont assurée dès le premier jour dans le monde théologique, on comprendra qu'il est impossible d'être un familier de saint Augustin sans être attiré par lui, consciemment ou inconsciemment, dans l'orbite de Platon."

the sententious perversions of the sophists. Plato on the other hand, was not concerned so much with natural truths as such, but rather with the order they bore to divine truth which on account of its lofty and highly spiritual import he left in the symbolic mode. St. Thomas with a scrupulous regard for the whole of reality adopted from Aristotle the literal mode of expressing truth as the most powerful weapon against the sophistry and agnosticism of his day. At the same time, in order to escape the dangerous tendencies towards the opposite extreme of rationalistic anthropomorphism which are implicit in Aristotelianism as applied to theology, St. Thomas carefully modified the extravagant pretenses of the literal mode of expression by his judicious use of the *via negativa* borrowed from the Christian Platonists. This latter method consists in negating all the imperfections characteristic of human concepts as derived from the creature before they can be literally applied to God. Thus by laying due emphasis upon the order of all things to God without suppressing or denying the things on which that order is founded, St. Thomas was able to give theology its proper position between philosophy and the beatific vision of which it is a participation. Hence the *Summa* is not only a synthesis of Christian doctrine but also of two great traditions. As for the School of Antioch, it appears that its best elements, with the exception of St. John Chrysostom's influence, came directly to St. Thomas from their original sources, namely, the texts of Aristotle himself. By availing himself of the expurgated editions of the Stagirite which had begun to appear at this time, St. Thomas was relieved in some measure from the arduous task of sifting out from authentic Aristotelianism the bulky dross of rationalism and heterodoxy which the Antiochene School had imbibed at the hands of such heresiarchs as Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus. It can therefore be said, with the above mentioned qualifications, that both of these theological schools have been harmonized in the *Summa*.

It is interesting to note that although the influence of Aristotle permeates the entire *Summa*, and almost exclusively in

the moral tracts, the Alexandrian teaching predominates in dogma and gives direction to the entire work. The great Christian authorities in the *Summa* are St. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, and St. John Damascene, heirs of the Alexandrian school, Platonist in spirit. For example, in the First Part, the Pseudo-Areopagite is cited 205 times, the Damascene 65, St. Basil 26, Origen 23, St. Chrysostom 16 and St. Gregory Nyssa 7 times.²⁶⁰ St. Gregory Nazianzen is singly extolled.²⁶¹ Augustine is cited as often as 250 times in the *Summa*.²⁶² In the tract on the passions there are 226 citations from Aristotle, 56 from Augustine, 12 from Pseudo-Dionysius and 9 from the Damascene.²⁶³

As noted, the Alexandrians predominate in the dogmatic treatises of the *Summa*, the First and Third Parts. In the First Part the authority of Augustine is ubiquitous. Pseudo-Dionysius is also valuable in the treatises on the nature and attributes of God, the names and science of God and the entire subject of angelology. The Damascene's authority is incorporated in the question of the divine names and of human liberty. In his cosmology St. Thomas lays great weight upon the authority of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom. In the Third Part St. Augustine is likewise the continuous authority, especially for the reasons of convenience. However, St. John Damascene is the theologian of the Incarnation *par excellence*. St. Thomas made his own the Damascene's teaching on individual human nature, which has not a proper hypostasis, though never without a hypostasis, being united to the Word; also concerning the rules for the communication of idioms and the teaching on the wills and operations, the human affections in Christ. St. John is also

²⁶⁰ Bardy, G., "Les sources Patristiques grecques de St. Thomas," *Rev. de Sc. Phil. et Theol.*, 1923.

²⁶¹ Cf. note 128 *supra*.

²⁶² Von Hertling, *Augustinuscite bei Thomas v. Aquin*.

²⁶³ Meier, *Die Lehre des Th. v. Aquin de passionibus animae*. Cf. Ignaz Backes, "Die Christologie des hl. Thomas v. Aquin und die griechischen Kirchenväter: 10. Pseudo-Dionysius; 11. Johannes von Damaskus." *Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur und Dogmengeschichte*, XVII, 3-4 (1931).

found in the tracts on the conception and nativity of Christ and the Redemption. St. Chrysostom is again cited on the complete nature, the baptism, manifestation, doctrine, temptation, and miracles of Christ.

The Second Part, the moral treatise of the *Summa*, is more fully the domain of Aristotelianism. The nature of the ultimate end and the principles of human acts are discussed at length. The treatment is more extensively philosophical. In the First Part of the Second Part Augustine is almost the sole authority among the Fathers. In the tracts on the human acts and the passions St. Gregory of Nyssa (whom St. Thomas often confused with Nemesius of Emesus, a Neo-Platonist) and the Damascene are cited insofar as they are in agreement with Aristotle. Pseudo-Dionysius is quoted in reference to habits in the angels and concerning the cause of the virtues. St. Thomas develops and brings to perfection the Augustinian doctrine on grace. The Second Part of the Second Part is likewise a treatment of the virtues taken singly in their natures. The definitions of faith of St. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius and the Damascene are reduced to St. Paul's statement. St. Augustine is the authority for the gifts corresponding to each of the virtues. He is also cited with reference to various vices and potential virtues. In the tract on the spiritual life the Doctor of Grace and to some extent the Pseudo-Areopagite are used.

It is of supreme importance that the architecture of the *Summa* be interpreted according to the avowed plan of the Angelic Doctor.²⁶⁴ It is the statement of this plan which unfolds the spirit of St. Thomas, not the mere logical divisions and subdivisions, but the living interior force which gives soul to the whole structure. From this viewpoint it is seen that the entire character of the *Summa* is theological. Even the most philosophical questions, e. g., the habits, passions, rational psychology, are introduced only insofar as they are related to God, as coming from Him or as principles of return to Him.

In sacred science all things are treated of under the aspect of

²⁶⁴ Cf. Chenu, *Le Plan de la Somme Théologique*.

God; either because they are God Himself; or because they refer to God as their beginning or end. . . . Some, however, looking to what is treated of in this science, and not to the aspect under which it is treated, have asserted the object of this science to be something other than God. . . . Of all these things, in truth, we treat in this science, but so far as they have reference to God.²⁶⁵ Whatever other conclusions are reached in this sacred science are comprehended under God, not as parts or species or accidents, but as in some way related to Him.²⁶⁶

Having established the theological note of his work, St. Thomas next constructed his frame of reference according to which all things would find their place in relationship to God.

St. Thomas had already foreshadowed the plan of his *Summa* in the *Commentary on the Sentences*:²⁶⁷

For since the aim of sacred science is concerning divine things, and since the divine is taken as it relates to God either as principle or as end, the consideration of this doctrine will be of things according as they come forth from God as a principle, and according as they are referred to Him as an end. Wherefore, in the first part he determines concerning divine things according to their issue from their principle [*secundum exitum a principio*]; in the second according to their turning back to their end [*secundum reditum in finem*].

Thus the great circle of being—God as beginning and end, everything outside of God *secundum exitum a principio et reditum in finem*—becomes the basis of his division. The *Summa* is solidly established on reality.

Because the chief aim of sacred doctrine is to teach the knowledge of God, not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is the beginning of things and their last end, and especially of rational creatures, as is clear from what has already been said (art. 7, preced. quest.), therefore, in our endeavor to expound this science, we shall treat: (1) of God; (2) of the rational creature's advance towards God; (3) of Christ, who as man, is our way to God.²⁶⁸

The First Part treats of God, both as He is in Himself and as the efficient cause, and all things as emanating from Him, their

²⁶⁵ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 7.

²⁶⁷ *I Sent.*, d. 2, *divisio textus*.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, ad 2.

²⁶⁸ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 2, *prologus*.

creator, conservator and exemplar. Since these beings which proceed from God as stable, complete in nature, have implanted in their nature a movement of conversion back to their principle, the Second Part embraces God as final cause, which beatifies and glorifies the end of the divine image, man. Consequently, in these two divisions all things pertaining to the necessary process of *exitus* and *reditus* are included. Into this circuit the fact of the Incarnation, Christ, enters as the means of return willed by God, according to His free and gratuitous design, as Scripture reveals.

Forasmuch as our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to save His people from their sins (*Mt. I, 21*), as the angel announced, showed unto us in His own Person the way of truth, whereby we may attain to the bliss of eternal life by rising again, it is necessary, in order to complete the work of theology, that after considering the last end of human life, and the virtues and vices, there should follow the consideration of the Saviour of all, and of the benefits bestowed by Him on the human race.²⁶⁹

In this return Christ is the Way, the Artisan. The fact of His mediatorship is the pure result of divine liberality, and not necessarily a part of that divine love which produces creatures and draws them back to the source of that love.

In the plan of his masterpiece, St. Thomas was most certainly inspired by Christian Platonist tradition as realized through the Augustinian, Dionysian, and Damascene influences. As noted, God was most consciously the theme of their writings; they were occupied with the process of *exitus* and *reditus*. Christian tradition had purged the Neo-Platonist doctrine of emanation and conversion of all determinist and pantheist tendencies. All things were grasped from the viewpoint of the divine. God is the exemplar, man His image—a Neo-Platonist theme which St. Thomas exploited from St. John Damascene for his own purpose.

Since, as Damascene states (*De Fide Orthod. II, 12*), man is said to be made to God's image, insofar as the image implies an intelligent being endowed with free-will and self-movement; now

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, III, *prologus*.

that we have treated of the exemplar, i. e., God, and of those things which came forth from the power of God in accordance with His will; it remains for us to treat of His image, i. e., man, inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free will and control of his actions.²⁷⁰

Thus St. Thomas is in full accord with the mystics of the Alexandrian School and the spirit of that tradition. For his plan is a religious exposition. One of the bases of his system is the Platonist theory of ideas as understood by Augustine. For St. Thomas the natures proceeding from the hands of God realize and reflect, in themselves and in their destiny, the divine ideas.

The grand plan of the *Summa*, then, orders, reduces all things to their reference to God. This theme runs through every tract.

Having treated of the spiritual and of the corporeal creature, we now proceed to treat of man, who is composed of a spiritual and a corporeal substance. We shall treat first of the nature of man, and secondly of his origin. Now the theologian considers the nature of man in relation to the soul; but not in relation to the body, except insofar as the body has relation to the soul. Hence the first object of our consideration will be the soul. And since Dionysius (Ang. Hier., XI) says that three things are to be found in spiritual substances—essence, power and operation—we shall treat first of what belongs to the essence of the soul; secondly, of what belongs to its power; thirdly, of what belongs to its operation.²⁷¹ We next treat of the powers of the soul specifically. The theologian, however, has only to inquire specifically concerning the intellectual and appetitive powers, in which the virtues reside. . . .²⁷² We have now to consider the acts of the soul in regard to the intellectual and the appetitive powers; for the other powers do not directly come under the consideration of the theologian. . . .²⁷³

Moral principles are not to be considered only as principles of doing but as principles of return. In regard to the nature of man, the Fathers, especially St. Augustine, were interested only in the states of man as revealed by the Scriptures and little in a theoretical consideration of human nature. St. Thomas main-

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I-II, *prologus*.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, I, q. 75, *prologus*.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, I, q. 78, *prologus*.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, q. 84, *prologus*.

tained this frame of reference, while admirably fusing with it the anthropology of Aristotle. The hierarchical view of reality so characteristic of Pseudo-Dionysius is found, besides the tract on the angels, in the questions on the action of God on creatures, of creature upon creature. In fine, it is through the plan of the *Summa* that we are given entrance to the spirit of St. Thomas, which is the spirit of Alexandria. A few individual doctrines of the Angelic Doctor will be pointed out briefly in order to confirm this conclusion.

Scripture is, of course, one of the first principles of theology. Sacred doctrine

properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof. . . . For our Faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets, who wrote the canonical books, and not on the revelations (if any such there are) made to other doctors.²⁷⁴

In the *Summa*, particularly in its opening question, St. Thomas has summed up his exegetical principles. In his insistence on the fundamental primacy of the literal sense, the influence of the tradition of Antioch seems to be present. At the same time, as is evident from his entire works, he employs all the advantages of the spiritual senses.

The author of Holy Writ is God, in whose power it is to signify His meaning, not by words only (as men also do), but also by things themselves. So, whereas in every other science things are signified by words, this science has the property, that the things signified by the words have themselves also a signification. Therefore that first signification whereby words signify things belongs to the first sense, the historical or literal. The signification is called the spiritual sense, which is based upon the literal and presupposes it. . . . Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and since the author of Holy Writ is God, Who by one act comprehends all things by His intellect, it is not unfitting, as Augustine says (*Confess.* xii) if, even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Writ should have several senses.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, a. 10. *Quodlib.* VII, a. 16, c.: "In nulla scientia humana industria inventa, proprie loquendo, potest inveniri nisi litteralis sensus; sed solum in ista scriptura cuius Spiritus Sanctus est auctor, homo vero instrumentum."

The literal sense must be the basis of all the other interpretations.

Thus in Holy Writ no confusion results, for all the senses are founded on one—the literal—from which alone can any argument be drawn, and not from those intended in allegory, as Augustine says (Epist. xlviii). Nevertheless, nothing of Holy Scripture perishes on account of this, since nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward by the Scripture in its literal sense.²⁷⁶

Consequently, the literal sense is of major importance for argumentation, the sense which is necessarily true.

The parabolical sense is contained in the literal, for by words things are signified properly and figuratively. Nor is the figure itself, but that which is figured, the literal sense. . . . Hence it is plain that nothing false can ever underlie the literal sense of Holy Writ.²⁷⁷

The literal sense

is called history . . . whenever something is simply related; it is called etiology when its cause is assigned . . . it is called analogy whenever the truth of one text of Scripture is shown not to contradict the truth of another . . . allegory alone stands for the three spiritual senses.²⁷⁸ It is not lack of authority that one cannot draw an efficacious argument from the spiritual sense; that comes from the very nature of the similitudes on which it is founded, for one

²⁷⁶ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 10, ad 1um.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, ad 3.

I Sent., *Prol.*, q. 1, a. 5, c: "Ad destructionem errorum non proceditur nisi per sensum litteralem; . . . unde et Dionysius dicit (in Epist. ad Titum in princ.) quod symbolica theologia non est argumentativa."

Quodlibet., VII, a. 14, ad 4

Cf. *Opusc.* 14, t. XVI (ed. Parm.), for the principle—*ex solo sensu litterali efficitur argumentum trahitur*.

Summa Theol., q. 68, a. 1: "In discussing questions of this kind two rules are to be observed, as Augustine teaches (*Gen. ad litt.* 1, 18). The first is, to hold the truth of Scripture without wavering. The second is that since Holy Scripture can be explained in a multiplicity of senses, one should adhere to a particular explanation, only in such measure as to be ready to abandon it, if it be proved with certainty to be false; lest Holy Scripture be exposed to the ridicule of unbelievers, and obstacles be placed to their believing."

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 10, ad 1.

thing can be similar to many and without sophistry one could not conclude to one of them in a determined fashion.²⁷⁹

For the divine author, the spiritual sense of Scripture is literal,²⁸⁰ but for us it is not. It is necessary to compare it with other passages in the literal sense and in conformity with the teaching of the Church.²⁸¹ Another valuable criterion, although external, of the literal sense when the textual evidence is insufficient, is the testimony of tradition.

The ancient Doctors could refute better than we the errors of the Gentiles, because they could know them better, having been Gentiles or because they lived among them and were versed in their doctrines. And, as stated above (Q. 1, a. 7), the nearer they were to Christ, the more distinct was their knowledge of Christ's mysteries.²⁸²

It was on questions of dogma that St. Thomas as a rule allowed no accommodation; the literal sense alone was employed, e. g., in the tracts on the Trinity and the hypostatic union.

The Angelic Doctor reduced the presence of symbols and figures in the Scriptures to their necessity and utility. They are necessary for man's understanding and useful for preserving the truths of faith.

Now it is natural to man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects . . . hence in Holy Writ spiritual truths are fittingly taught under the likeness of material things. . . . Sacred doctrine makes use of metaphors as both necessary and useful. . . . The ray of divine revelation is not extinguished by the sensible imagery where-with it is veiled, as Dionysius says (*Celest. Hierarch. i*); and its truth so far remains that it does not allow the minds of those to whom the revelation has been made to rest in the metaphors, but raises them to the knowledge of the truths. . . . The very hiding of truth in figures is useful for the exercise of thoughtful minds,

²⁷⁹ *Quodlibet. VII*, a. 14, ad 4. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 102, a. 1: "For whatever Scripture tells us about paradise is set down as a matter of history; and wherever Scripture makes use of this method, we must hold to the historical truth of the narrative as a foundation of whatever spiritual explanation we may offer."

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, I, q. 1, a. 10. *Quodlibet.*, VII, a. 14, ad 5.

²⁸¹ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 1, a. 9-10.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, q. 2, a. 7. *I Cont. Gent.*, c. 11.

and as a defense against the ridicule of the impious . . . because this is more befitting the knowledge of God that we have in this life. For what He is not is clearer to us than what He is. Therefore similitudes drawn from things farthest away from God form within us a truer estimate that God is above whatsoever we may say or think of Him. . . .²⁸³

Thus, the things of God are veiled in symbols which, in their primary reference imperfect, do not allow the mind to rest in them as embracing the divine, but of their nature lead to what is higher and beyond.

St. Thomas crystallized the Alexandrian teaching on the ancillary position of philosophy and its value in the exposition of the faith—the burden of theology.

This science can in a sense depend upon the philosophical sciences, not as though it stood in need of them, but only in order to make its teaching clearer. For it accepts its principles not from other sciences but immediately from God, by revelation. Therefore it does not depend upon other sciences as upon the higher, but makes use of them as of the lesser, and as handmaidens. . . . That it thus uses them is not due to its own defect or insufficiency, but to the defect of our intelligence, which is more easily led by what is known through natural reason (from which proceed the other sciences), to that which is above reason, such as are the teachings of this science. Although arguments from human reason cannot avail to prove what must be received on faith, nevertheless this doctrine argues from articles of faith to other truths. . . . But sacred doctrine makes use even of human reason, not, indeed, to prove faith (for thereby the merit of faith would come to an end), but to make clear other things that are put forward in this doctrine. Since therefore grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers to charity. . . . Hence sacred doctrine makes use also of the authority of philosophers in those questions in which they were able to know the truth by natural reason . . . as extrinsic and probable arguments.²⁸⁴

In his treatment of the nature of God and of our knowledge of Him, St. Thomas followed the best Alexandrian traditions. He expanded and elucidated the Christian Platonist teaching

²⁸³ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 9.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, a. 5, ad 2; a. 8, ad 1, 2.

of the divine transcendence with the clear, scientific notions of the Philosopher. This is his clear purpose throughout the tract *De Deo uno*.

Now, because we cannot know what God is, but rather what He is not, we have no means for considering how God is, but rather how He is not. . . . Now it can be shown how God is not, by denying of Him whatever is opposed to the idea of Him—viz., composition, motion and the like.²⁸⁵

He agrees with St. John Damascene that it is impossible to define the essence of God, and he adds:

Although we cannot know in what consists the essence of God, nevertheless in this science we make use of His effects, either of nature or of grace, in place of a definition, in regard to whatever is treated of in this science concerning God.²⁸⁶

God is supremely transcendent, above categories and predications, knowledge and being.

God is not said to be not existing as if He did not exist at all, but because He exists above all that exists; inasmuch as He is His own existence. Hence it does not follow that He cannot be known at all, but that He exceeds every kind of knowledge; which means that He is not comprehended.²⁸⁷ God is the supreme good simply, and not only as existing in any genus or order of things.²⁸⁸

Hence, being above all we can know of Him, God is nameless.

The reason why God has no name, or is said to be above being named, is because His essence is above all that we understand about God and signify in word.²⁸⁹

From His effects—from creatures and from revelation—²⁹⁰ we can know the existence of the First Cause and something of His nature, but very imperfectly. Creatures are, therefore, the medium of our knowledge.

Natural things are midway between the knowledge of God and

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 3, *prologus*.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, q. 12, a. 1, ad 3.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 6, a. 2. Cf. *ibid.*, q. 4, a. 3, ad 2; q. 3, a. 5.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 1.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 12, a. 13, ad 1.

our knowledge; for we receive knowledge from natural things, of which God is the cause by His knowledge.²⁹¹

Their insufficiency argues an imperfection in our mode of knowledge.

The created essence is compared to the essence of God, as the imperfect to the perfect act. Therefore the created essence cannot sufficiently lead us to the knowledge of the divine essence, but rather the converse.²⁹²

We thus name God as we know Him, imperfectly. Yet these attributes are present in Him in truth.

Negative names applied to God or signifying His relation to creatures manifestly do not at all signify His substance, but rather express the distance of the creature from Him, or His relation to something else, or rather, the relation of creatures to Himself. But as regards absolute and affirmative names of God, . . . these names signify the divine substance, and are predicated substantially of God, although they fall short of a full representation of Him. . . . For these names express God, so far as our intellects know Him. Now since our intellect knows God from creatures, it knows Him as far as creatures represent Him. . . . Therefore the aforesaid names signify the divine substance, but in an imperfect manner, even as creatures represent it imperfectly.²⁹³ As regards what is signified by these names, they belong properly to God, and more properly than they belong to creatures, and are applied primarily to Him. But as regards their mode of signification, they do not properly and strictly apply to God; for their mode of signification applies to creatures.²⁹⁴

Thus the names applied to God adequately signify creatures, but may be transferred to signify God primarily.²⁹⁵

It is not necessary that all the divine names should import relation to creatures, but it suffices that they be imposed from some perfection flowing from God to creatures.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, q. 14, a. 8, ad 3. Cf. *ibid.*, q. 13 *in toto*, de *divinis Nominibus*.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, q. 14, a. 6, ad 2. Cf. *ibid.*, q. 13, a. 5, ad 2.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, q. 13, a. 2.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, a. 3.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 13, a. 6.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, a. 11, ad 3.

The mode of our knowledge of the divine is threefold. The way of negation, which is based upon the divine transcendence, removes all imperfections in the divine, emphasizes the divine dissimilarity with creatures.²⁹⁷

And although in God there is no privation, still, according to the mode of our apprehension, He is known to us by way only of privation and remotion.²⁹⁸

At the same time the way of affirmation places perfections in the divine nature formally, though according to analogy. They are substantially in God, but in a more eminent manner. This more eminent manner is in itself mysterious and expressed only negatively and relatively. The concept of a certain perfection as it is in man in some degree circumscribes and comprehends the thing signified; it is distinct from all his other attributes. With God it is different. The thing signified remains as uncomprehended, as exceeding the signification of the name.

Because perfections flowing from God to creatures exist in a higher state in God Himself (Q. IV, a. 2), whenever a name taken from any created perfection is attributed to God, it must be separated in its signification from anything that belongs to that imperfect mode proper to creatures.²⁹⁹ We can name a thing according to the knowledge we have of its nature from its properties and effects. . . . Now from the divine effects we cannot know the divine nature in itself, so as to know what it is; but only by way of eminence, and by way of causality, and of negation as stated above (Q. XII, a. 12). Thus the name *God* signifies the divine nature, for this name was imposed to signify something existing above all things, the principle of all things, and removed from all things; for those who name God intend to signify all this.³⁰⁰

Since our concepts of God are all in some way derived from a creature-foundation, creatures, according to their own natures, are from a theological point of view symbols of the uncreated, the divine.

²⁹⁷ *Fourth Lateran Council* (Denz. 432). Between the Creator and the creature not so great a similarity can be detected, as not to detect a greater dissimilarity.

²⁹⁸ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 11, a. 3, ad 2.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 14, a. 1, ad 1. ³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2. Cf. *ibid.*, q. 13, a. 1, 3.

Now as words formed by a man are signs of his intellectual knowledge; so are creatures, formed by God, signs of his wisdom.³⁰¹

Each in the measure in which it shares in the divine perfections mirrors the divine essence.

But every creature has its own proper species, according to which it participates in some degree in likeness to the divine essence.³⁰² Likeness of creatures to God is not affirmed on account of agreement in form according to the formality of the same genus or species, but solely according to analogy, inasmuch as God is essential being, whereas other things are beings by participation.³⁰³

Even reason itself is a sharing in the perfection of God and a means of knowing Him.

For the light of natural reason itself is a participation of the divine light.³⁰⁴

It is in accord with this mode of human intellection that God accommodated the revelation of His truths.

In the tract *De Deo Uno* St. Thomas, following the lead of his Patristic Masters, steered a clear course between the Scylla of agnosticism and the Charybdis of anthropomorphism. The former was avoided by affirming the presence in God, substantially and properly, of absolutely simple perfections, primarily in Him. Against anthropomorphism he predicated the perfections of God and creatures not univocally but analogously. Consequently, our knowledge of God, drawn from creatures, themselves symbols of the divine, is properly symbolical.³⁰⁵

V. CONCLUSION

1. The greater part of this study has been devoted to an analysis of the two great schools of the earlier Christian theological tradition—Alexandria and Antioch. In order to discover

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, III, q. 12, a. 3, ad 2.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, I, q. 15, a. 2. Cf. *ibid.*, q. 14, a. 9, ad 2.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, q. 4, a. 3, ad 3.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, q. 12, a. 11, ad 3. Cf. *ibid.*, q. 16, a. 5, ad 3.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, a. 9, ad 2, 3.

their doctrines and methods, the most important representatives in each tradition were briefly studied. The endeavor has been to ascertain through what channels this double stream of influence has entered into the thought of the Angelic Doctor. The *Summa Theologica* has been the sole source of investigation, since it represents the ensemble and the perfection of St. Thomas' teaching. Examples, which can be multiplied throughout the entire work, of the existence and extent of this influence have been offered. Nothing more has been intended than to outline the problem—how these theological traditions influenced St. Thomas; to show that there is foundation for the claims made, and to incite interest toward further studies in the same branch of Thomistic research.³⁰⁶

2. The *Summa Theologica* is the greatest synthesis of Christian theology. Within its pages is included the harmony of many previously diverse elements and teachings. Above all it is the synthesis of Aristotelianism and Christian Platonism. This latter theological tradition, as St. Thomas saw it, was preserved more adequately by three important authorities—St. Augustine, St. John Damascene and Pseudo-Dionysius. They were the spiritual heirs of the School of Alexandria, the spirit of Christian Platonism. It was upon this Platonist frame of reference that St. Thomas admirably infused the scientific spirit and teaching of the Philosopher. The Platonist spirit was one of synthesis, seeing all things in hierarchy, as related to God—the vertical view of reality. Aristotelianism was the spirit of analysis, the scientific investigation of natures—a horizontal view of reality. In his *Summa* St. Thomas made these elements converge into

³⁰⁶ Concerning the authorities cited throughout the *Summa*, studies could be made as to whether St. Thomas knew them in the text or through the florilegia and compilations so numerous in the Middle Ages. Also, there is a problem of which were used merely to confirm the doctrine expounded in an article, and which were used strictly as a theological premise from authority. Studies on the extent of St. Thomas' dependence upon each of the three Masters cited in the *Summa* would be very valuable. Especially valuable would be the study of St. Thomas and St. John Damascene, who both as a saint and as a doctor had much in common with the *Doctor Communis*.

one complementary whole. Except in his exegesis where he followed the primacy of the literal sense, at least in dogmatic questions, it seems that the elements of the tradition of Antioch were supplied for St. Thomas from Aristotle himself.

On the other hand, the Angelic Doctor was no mere synthesist, but a true architect. He judged, sifted, revised, corrected some of the essential lines and perfected the heritage he had received. Cajetan says truly of him,

So great was his veneration for the ancient and sacred Doctors that he may be said to have gained a perfect understanding of them all. Thomas gathered together their doctrines like the scattered limbs of a body, and moulded them into a whole. He arranged them in so wonderful an order, and increased them with such great additions, that rightly and deservedly he is reckoned a singular safeguard and glory of the Catholic Church.³⁰⁷

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³⁰⁷ *Comm. in II-IIae*, q. 148, a. 4, *in fin.* Also quoted by Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*.

BOOK REVIEW

The Condition of Man. By LEWIS MUMFORD. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1944. Pp. 467. \$5.00.

The experience of reading *The Condition of Man* is comparable to several days of conversation with an intriguing and forceful personality, one who startles by his epigrams and insights, one who oftentimes provokes by his personalizations and generalizations, yet one withal whose underlying conviction is caught and shared because, and sometimes in spite of, the evidence that is presented. In this work, Lewis Mumford, Professor of Humanities at Stanford University, has sketched for himself a huge task: "to deal at length with the tangled elements of Western man's spiritual history. . . . The time has come for a new drama to be conceived and enacted. Each of us has his part to play in that renewal. And first of all, we must understand the formative forces that are still at work in our civilization: by such fuller and deeper knowledge of our own living past, we will refashion the actors themselves and give them new parts to perform. . . . We must recapture once more our sense of what it is to be a man . . ." (p. 14).

The Condition of Man is the third volume in the series that opened with *Technics and Civilization*, a history of the machine and a critical study of its effects upon civilization; the second volume, *The Culture of Cities*, is a penetrating analysis of the new role of cities and regions in our modern civilization. In order of importance, the author ranks this volume first, since it deals with the purposes and ends of human development. Because it treats of human purposes and ends in an age when finality in human affairs is either denied or seriously controverted, the book is bound to arouse comment along the whole critical continuum from lusty condemnation to enthusiastic approbation.

Approaching history as "a reservoir of human creativeness," the author opens his study with the Greek and Roman civilizations, for if we would understand our present selves, "we must understand the central core which formed the primitive Christian" (p. 17). While the Greeks sought to achieve an organic society, they failed because they did not in their parochialism embrace all humanity, a failure to be concerned with the whole life of man and with every member of human society. Rome, seeking a greater universality failed because it lacked the inner logic to fulfill the powers of ubiquitous Roman law, Roman administration, Roman sani-

tation, Roman engineering; "as life became mechanically disciplined it became spiritually incoherent" (p. 39).

In Chapter II on "The Primacy of the Person," Mr. Mumford introduces Jesus of Nazareth with the assumption that "much of his actual doctrine, perhaps part of the kernel, was misunderstood or rejected by his more simple-minded recorders" (p. 52). The interest of Jesus was in "the redemption of man's very humanity, in the perpetual renewal and re-dedication of the living to the task of self-development: he sought to bring the inner and the outer aspects of the personality into organic balance by throwing off compulsions, constraints, automatisms" (p. 54). Looking at Christ as the mystic and the psychologist, and mayhaps the psychoanalyst, the author considers him as one of the great prophets of emergent evolution, contributing to the gradual building up of personality and its extension in theory to every member of the community. "What was lacking in his creed was what was lacking in his native environment, the back countries, far from the big cities with their art and learning" (p. 60). Mumford likens the Christian Church to the tomb in which Christ was interred. Doctrinal Christianity, from Paul to Augustine, was "essentially the product of an informal revolutionary committee of correspondence" (p. 65), gathering, in the unverified opinion of the author, many things besides the sayings and deeds of Jesus, thus to build up what is known as Christian theology.

Taking the Church as an example, Mr. Mumford describes the transition from personality to community which is essential to his main thesis. To him, only at the moment of formulation is an idea its very self; to survive, the idea must adapt itself to an impure medium, the medium of life; otherwise it is doomed to sterility. As it creates new institutions or reforms old ones, the idea, in the process of vulgarization, is warped. "Therefore, if the original idea that has been incorporated and embodied in the community's life is itself to remain alive, there must be a perpetual going back to original sources, and an equal capacity to anticipate and formulate new experiences which will enable further growth to take place" (p. 72). This theory has much to recommend it if we limit ourselves to purely human institutions and leaders. It can also be applied to an institution such as the Christian Church from the historical point of view. One wonders if Mr. Mumford had investigated more closely Christ's claims to Divinity and the relation between Christ and His Mystical Body, the Church, would he be so prone to define Christianity in such terms as to hold it apparent "that Jesus of Nazareth was the first heretic" (p. 75). The author's flair for the catchy phrase sometimes distorts the truth. The reader gets the impression that Mr. Mumford is not pushing his own theory far enough; he is too prone to examine the letter and miss the spirit, to see the pallor

of death enshrouding the dying Church as it came upon the dying Christ, but not to witness the constant resurrection of the Church when, like its Founder, it has been many times pronounced dead.

As the writer delineates the social world of Augustine, "a forerunner of Freud," of Jerome who "announced Western Europe's spiritual hibernation," of Benedict, and Gregory who enabled the Papacy to succeed as "an agent of efficient political organization, not as a repository of spiritual enlightenment . . .," he finds Romanesque man leading a sentient existence, seeking only protection, subject to "the new manic-depressive visions of Christian theology" (p. 105). "There is scarcely a single aspect of this culture which does not become clearer when one interprets it as a neurotic dream phenomenon" (p. 107). Mumford borrows more than a little from Freud.

With the year 1000 A.D. and the failure of the millennial reign to materialize, there came a new spring to Western Europe; it had at last broken through the cracked mold of Roman civilization; it now had its own life to live. Mumford interprets the prohibition of the marriage of priests as a defense of the Church against the new flood of erotic energy; and dynamically, the Church "reluctantly sanctioned a womanly redeemer, nearer to the popular heart than the Holy Trinity—the Virgin Mary . . ." (p. 109).

The medieval economy, based on a feudalized agriculture and a corporate municipal economy, brought about a change from custom to written law, from fixed, all-embracing duties to specified privileges, from servility to civility. The traditional elements of the medieval life are here treated, oftentimes with insufficient respect for historical accuracy. For instance, when St. Dominic saw that Franciscan poverty brought provisions in greater quantity than was needed, he "went into retreat and founded a parallel order of preaching friars" (p. 123). Such dangerous simplification is not borne out by the researches of Jarrett, Mandonnet and other reputable historians of the Dominican Order. It was unfortunate, according to Mumford, that the essential insights of Francis's vision were betrayed and its principles undermined. "He sought to get rid of all the encumbrances to Christian living and he completely forgot, or rather, he heartily embraced, the most formidable of all these encumbrances in the thirteenth century, the Roman Church itself" (p. 125).

The two greatest collective products of the thirteenth century were the Gothic cathedral and scholastic philosophy. "The first risked security for the sake of its own audacious self-fulfillment: the second courted stultification for the sake of finality" (p. 126). Mr. Mumford accepts the works of Thomas Aquinas as the soundest and best contribution of scholastic philosophy, but points out that his weakness lies in the fact that his

questions do not bring under rational scrutiny either the method of his logic or the postulates of Christian theology. Anent the first, one should peruse the Commentaries of St. Thomas on Aristotle; as for the postulates of theology, which are the principles of faith of revealed truths, reason is not capable of proving them; though it may indicate their credibility, and this St. Thomas always does. Of Thomas, the author says that "one cannot dispute the power of his mind or the sheer aggregate wealth of its operations: no one, except perhaps Aristotle, has ever taken in so much or had ordered his results with such thoroughness . . . the *Summa* is rather to be considered as a work of engineering, conceived on a cyclopean scale, by one of the ablest technical minds of any age" (p. 131). But for all his sympathetic treatment of Thomas, Mumford falsely accuses him of leaving out only one proof, the most important, the proof for the existence of God. How the author missed Question 2 in the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologica* or the tract on the existence of God in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is hard to explain. The praise of the Angelic Doctor is rather well negated by the writer's specious criticism of his theory of knowledge, his facility "in adroitly getting around the falsehoods and errors in canonical scriptures that were in contradiction to experience and reason" (p. 136), his subservience to the dogmas of the Church, and the neglect to use the words of Jesus himself as an authority, "as if the Angelic Doctor understood that Jesus's doctrine of life as the manifestation and exaltation of love was the grain of radium that might disintegrate this complex scholastic structure" (p. 136). Did Mr. Mumford miss the tract on Charity in the *Summa Theologica*?

Summing up the medieval period, the author says that the Church embodied rationality and ideal purpose, giving collective dignity to human life at large as no other institution had ever done for so large a part of the Western World before. Fellowship and beauty were the Church's great gifts; but before man could long enjoy them, the forces of disintegration were at work. These are the subject of a chapter entitled "Capitalism, Absolutism, Protestantism."

In the introduction to this chapter, Mr. Mumford points out that the downfall of a culture as a whole may lead to rapid advances in this or that part of it. He shows how the Black Death, by removing a third or half of the population of Europe, took with it a multitude of skills, a vast heritage of living knowledge, an abundance of sensitive discrimination, passed from parent to child, from master to apprentice, from neighbor to neighbor. "There is no mechanical substitute for a living tradition" (p. 155). The Black Death produced a break in social continuity, loosening connections with the immediate past, making it easier to begin on fresh foundations than to resume old connections.

Capitalism is the first trend to be considered; and its inception is due, according to Mumford and contrary to Tawney, Weber and Fanfani, to the medieval Church which, economically speaking, "had become a machine for manufacturing salvation" (p. 156). The author's loose use of the term "capitalism" makes this section one of the least understandable of the book. He says that "the capitalist super-ego was as much in conflict with man's diversified biological and social needs as that of the Christian Church: it was based on an equally wholesale system of denials and negations . . ." (p. 168).

Financial concentration and political despotism went together; governments courted the cooperation of great bankers and business men, repaying them handsomely in titles, lands, and commercial monopolies. The individual was smothered under the cult of uniformity, with the omnipotent state making automatons of men.

Protestantism in religion, avers Mumford, came into being, not as an ally of capitalism, but as its chief enemy; it was "an attempt to check the commercial spirit and prevent it from getting hold of the Church . . ." (p. 182). "If the eventual result of Luther's theology was to buttress the absolute state, and that of Calvin's theology was to fortify with self-righteousness the capitalist enterpriser, both results were far from their patent intention" (p. 184). Mumford sees the machine as the true symbol of Calvin's unrelenting God and his predestined order; "its very austerities and abnegations and self-denials, the driving discipline of the factory, with no time for idleness and therefore no opportunity for sin—all this gave the machine a foundation in protestant culture that it long lacked in countries like Spain and Italy which remained under the laxer and more human forms of the medieval Church and of medieval craftsmanship" (p. 194). The individualism of Protestantism turned into mere atomism; "the final flower of protestant teaching was a willful denial of the need for unity. A society of one is the ultimate denial of human unity: the very negation of the true person, who seeks to be at one with all humanity" (pp. 196-7).

Though mammonism and mechanism were the two great molders of human character between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, they had to meet with what the author terms "an uprising of the libido," an expansion of every activity that promoted animation, joy, bodily exuberance. Physical energy and money provided the material wherewithal for the artful luxuries whose enjoyment became the principal end of upper-class existence. The new libido created a commanding presence and a fearless self-reliance, typified in the new character of the gentleman, whose "most precious possession was his self-possession" (p. 204). As counterparts in the other sex, there were the courtesan and the lady, both celebrated in

art and both artful in capitalizing on the power of their sex. In the country house, the finer elements of this new expressive society were molded to form an upper class free from the economic anxieties of the masses and capable of the cultivation of the arts and the sciences. In the long run, however, country house existence was an aimless way of life. Mumford does see in Ignatius of Loyola a gentleman who was a saint. Explanation of this dubious distinction, rendered less striking by the comparison of the Jesuit Order to the Communist Party, winds up in a contrary figure: "The Society of Jesus, unfortunately, was conceived under the sign of the Despot" (p. 230).

In the next chapter, entitled "The New Hemispheres," Mr. Mumford indicates that the era of discovery beginning with the finding of the New World helped bring into existence a new ideal of the human personality, "one whose wishes, no longer locked up in dreams and returning circuitously in subjective emanations, now worked upon the outer world as pure will. The outer man conquered; the inner man abdicated" (p. 234). In the ideological New World of science, there was likewise an abandonment of the inner and subjective in every form. "Science opened up the external world and bade it welcome; but it shut out the self; it enlarged the horizon but contracted the center" (p. 243). The separation of positive science from normative science caused a deeper split in the Western personality. "The New World, as conceived through the mechanical sciences, was a world of isolates, presided over by isolates. The depersonalized scientist was at his best in a world from which the personality itself had been removed: his own first of all" (p. 246). Modern Man, Mumford avers, became an ideological scarecrow.

Turning next to the doctrine of progress, the author wisely observes that progress may be considered either as getting closer to a goal or getting farther away from a starting point. In the eighteenth century the latter meaning prevailed, an era in which novelty became a merit and change of any sort a source of hope. Two main types of personality clearly defined themselves toward the end of the eighteenth century: the romantic and the utilitarian: the one turning back to nature, the other turning nature back to the profit of self. Of these, the romantic was the more popular in that century; but the difficulties attending social reform caused not a few to question its initial premise of the essential goodness of man.

In the following century, utilitarian ideology held sway, seeking the conquest of nature and the liberation of mankind by mechanical invention "In the name of economy, a thousand wasteful devices would be invented; and in the name of efficiency, new forms of mechanical time-wasting would be devised. . . . Without critical inquiry it (the utilitarian ideology) assumed that the new was better than the old, that the mechanical was

better than the vital, that the active was better than the passive, that the financially profitable was a sufficient indication of the humanly valuable. All those unqualified assertions were demonstrably false" (pp. 304-305). The answer of the utilitarians to all of life's enigmas was to work a little harder and to forget about it.

In reacting against the dehumanization process of the machine, people inclined to an emphasis on the vital things of life. Unhappily, with the help of Darwin's theory of natural selection, they identified "the natural with the savage, the organic with the primitive, the life-creating with the death-serving" (p. 351). In nationalism, we see the doctrine of the survival of the fittest applied to whole states; in the domain of sex, Freudian psychoanalysis sought to harmonize man's warring impulses. But all these reactions, the vital, the national, and the sexual, failed to alter the dominant pattern of life because they failed of union in what Mumford terms "the idolum of the organism" (p. 381). It is at this juncture that the author introduces his master, Patrick Geddes, as one who achieved the synthesis. "The basic change exemplified by Geddes was the unification of all the processes of life, the subjective and the objective, and the equal cultivation of the sciences, the arts, and the humanities" (p. 387).

Thus we are brought to the concluding chapter, "The Basis of Renewal." With prophetic sternness, Mumford mourns that most of our contemporaries are still unaware of the dimensions of the present catastrophe. We have sought, he says, to achieve perfection by eliminating the human element. The disease that threatens us is an organic one, requiring "a reorientation of our whole life, a change in occupation, a change in regimen, a change in personal relationships, not least, a change in attitude and conscious direction: fundamentally, a change in religion, our total sense of the world and life and time" (p. 393). Since organization has become destructive of human values, we must reassert once more the primacy of the person. The present period is a painful transition between two eras: the first associated with the rise of capitalism, militarism, scientism and mechanization; likewise with the counter-movements of protestantism, romanticism and democracy. The period of "humanization" that approaches will have as its theme "the resurgence of life, the displacement of the mechanical by the organic, and the reestablishment of the person as the ultimate term of all human effort. Cultivation, humanization, cooperation, symbiosis: these are the watchwords of the new world-enveloping culture" (p. 399).

The era of expansion is over and the era of stabilization is near at hand; balanced economy must replace the old competition. To achieve this balanced life, man must undergo an internal renewal that will carry him through the external transformation that the author has outlined. In

terms of life-fulfillment, the most important needs are those that foster spiritual activity and promote spiritual growth; and the deepest, the most organic, of these higher needs is that for love. "Only in one place can an immediate renewal begin: that is, within the person; and a remolding of the self and the super-ego is an inescapable preliminary to the great changes that must be made throughout every community, in every part of the world. . . . God must work within us" (p. 421-422).

* * * * *

One closes *The Condition of Man* with mixed sentiments. There is so much in it that is striking, relentlessly to the point. One sees here a mind that does not fear to survey the whole expanse of Western civilization, to probe the writings of scholars from Plato and Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas, Marx, Freud and Geddes, turning upon one and all the x-ray of a hypercritical sense. His sparkling epigrams and climactic quips compel the mind's attention; and the speed with which he turns from one fact or figure or philosophy to another is nothing less than breath-taking. His kaleidoscopic view of history is highly selective, as might be expected; but that he has selected the real high spots is not too apparent. It is as though he views the world from an airplane, to free himself from the provincialisms of the philosopher's chair or the hermit's mountain. This is not altogether advantageous: the valleys of human endeavor are filled up and the mountains made low; and it takes a discerning eye to delineate the topography of the civilization thus viewed.

Prof. Mumford strikes this reviewer as the great leveller. With broad sweeps he levels the idols of modern thought, men like Marx, Darwin, and Freud; the house of so-called progressive education is crushed as one built upon sand; Jesus Christ, the Roman Catholic Church, Sts. Paul, Thomas Aquinas and Ignatius Loyola, all are made to feel the brunt of his relentless iconoclasm; protestantism, capitalism, romanticism, and socialism are blown away like papers before a pentecostal wind. And what would he erect once the demolition process is completed? It is a new civilization, whose ideal personality is a balanced person, in dynamic interaction with every part of his environment and every part of his heritage. What is needed is not reorganization, but reorientation, a change in direction and attitude.

What is the goal of this direction? Apparently it is the new idolum which we must create—"we must create a new super-ego." To create a new super-ego may mean two things. If "create" is taken in the strict sense, namely, to make something out of nothing, then it means that man must fashion a new being, a new ideal superior to himself. But it is not within the power of man, who is a creature, to create. That is the work of God. Taking "create" in an analogical sense, we may envision man,

by progressive thought, reformulating the ideal of his existence, aiming it toward a higher perfection. Yet by what norms are we to judge perfection if we do not have a standard, something objective, against which we may measure the fulfillment of man's promise? In this man needs God; as Mr. Mumford says, "God must work within us."

If we take religion as embracing the sum total of man's relationships with God, then religion should provide an answer. It is at this point that the author leaves us rather much in the dark. As Ordway Tead observes in his review of the book (*The Saturday Review of Literature*, Vol. XXVII, May 20, 1944), the acknowledgment of religion as critical and powerful seems somehow timid and restrained. "One would have valued a still further chapter on the ways and means of renewal—even on the regimen of faith."

If religion holds the answer, then he who would improve the condition of man should seek a Creed and a Church which embodies all the noblest aspirations of man towards God. That Creed, that Church, may be, to the agnostic, one of the existing Churches, or it may be one yet to come. Before venturing a new religion and a new Church, it is not unreasonable to investigate the claims of existing Churches. Speaking only for the Catholic Church, this reviewer knows that Mr. Mumford has not given it impartial study. His attitude toward the divinity of Christ, the "inventing" of a womanly redeemer in Mary, the distorted presentation of the development of doctrine and the caustic jibes at ecclesiastical practices of the Roman Church, betray an indebtedness to anti-Catholic sources which could be counteracted by recourse to standard Catholic references or to the offices of a Catholic priest. Were he to study, for instance, the classic encyclical letter of Pope Pius XII on "The Mystical Body of Christ," he would find in its pages an affirmation of his plea for the primacy of the person, for the internal renewal that must precede the external transformation; therein is explained the vital relationships that should exist between the individual and the organic community which is the Mystical Body of Christ; there he will find the true super-ego, not a Freudian projection which man creates, but Christ, the Son of God, Who created man.

It is sincerely to be hoped that Mr. Mumford, who has gone so far, will go further in his quest of the truth, the Person—God.

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